OLDEN TIMES:

OR,

PENNSYLVANIA RURAL LIFE,

SOME FIFTY YEARS AGO,

AND OTHER POEMS,

BY

H. L. FISHER.

ILLUSTRATED.

Happy he whom neither wealth nor fashion
Nor the march of the encroaching city
Drives an exile
From the hearth of his ancestral homestead :

We may build more splendid habitations,
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculptures,
But we cannot
Buy with gold the old associations.
—*Longfellow.*

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TO

COL. SAMUEL SHOCH,

A VENERABLE AND HONORABLE SURVIVOR AND MOST WORTHY TYPE OF THE OLDEN TIMES HEREIN SO CRUDELY PORTRAYED, THIS BOOK, WITH HIS PERMISSION, IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFATORY.

THIS book, (like Part II. of a previous one in Pennsylvania German,) the author is well aware, is but a crude attempt to do—what will, no doubt, ere long, be well done by some one equal to the task—preserve in verse, the memories of the *rural home-life* of Pennsylvanians of a few generations of the past. The utmost that he can hope to have accomplished is, to have been, in, at least some small degree, instrumental in perpetuating the respectful recollection of times, ways, and things, which, though not strictly within the domain of true poetry, yet lie near the heart of every one who loves the lurings of the retrospect.

While the plausible objection of mere sensuousness will, no doubt, be urged, it may be well to remember that no claim whatever to poetic inspiration is made; no pretension to the art divine. The crude pictures portrayed in the following pages, are pictures,—not so much of the imagination, as of realities—of a style of persons and things that were, but are no more; and which, by their relation to those of the present time, may be of some little interest, at least to the curious. To this, the answer may be that, then, the subjects treated of belong, properly, to local history. But what historian has condescended to enter the nursery, the play-ground, the school-house, the church, the harvest-field, the training-field,—in a word, into the social and domestic life of, even a half century past, and attempted to describe its manners, customs, superstitions, folk-lore, etc.? As for History, she may be, in this respect, not unlike Science, as described by Schiller:

> "To some she is the goddess great,
> To some the milch-cow of the field;
> Their care is but to calculate
> What *butter* she will yield."

If, then, the book, such as it is, should be deemed rather sensuous and historic than poetic, let this be the author's apology: that a wandering amateur, for want, it may be, of proper discrimination, has strolled into a field neglected by the masters, and moreover, that in the olden times, chroniclers in verse were not uncommon.

Much that is lacking in style and imagery may be supplied, it is hoped, by the poetic nature and character of the subjects themselves; which, to say the least, abound in a quaint domestic folk-lore, in itself a prolific field for the antiquarian *litterateur*, but into which no one seems, as yet, to have thrust a sickle.*

*The folk-lore of other countries has been well written and presented to the public in very attractive forms. That of England, and also, within a few years past a very neat and exhaustive little work on Domestic Folk-lore, by Rev. T. F. Thistleton Dwyer, M. A., who, in the opening chapter says: "Around every stage of human life a variety of customs, most of which, aside from their antiquarian value, as having been bequeathed to us from the far-off past, are interesting in so far as they illustrate those old-world notions and quaint beliefs which marked the social and domestic life of our forefathers. Although, therefore, many of those may appear to us meaningless, yet it must be remembered that they were the natural outcome of that scanty knowledge and those crude conceptions which prevailed in less enlightened times than our own. Probably, if our ancestors were in our midst now, they would be able, in a great measure, to explain and account for what is often looked upon now-a-days as childish fancy and so much nursery rubbish."

Few men or women of even *thirty* summers, can re-visit the homestead and truthfully say or sing :—

Here they are as then they were,
Friendly voices still I hear;
Friend and playmate, as of yore,
Kindly welcome me once more!
House and barn and field and tree,
As in childhood, still I see;
Changeless as true love and truth,
Earnests of immortal youth!

But rather with Whittier :—

"O, home so desolate and lorn!
Did all thy memories die with thee?
Were any wed, were any born
Beneath this low-roof tree?

The murmuring brooks, the sighing breeze,
The pine's low whisper cannot tell;
Low mounds beneath the hemlock trees
Keep the home-secrets well.

Cease mother-land to fondly boast
Of sons far off who strive and thrive,
Forgetful that each swarming host
Leaves but an empty hive!"

The family home is a divine institution; a heaven-like retreat in our earthly pilgrimage; the scene of births and deaths, of hopes and fears, joys and sorrows. Yet, to it we turn from the toils and troubles of life for rest and comfort as to the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, or a fountain in the desert. From it, too, the earth is peopled; as we arrive at years of maturity, we take our departure, one by one, from it, and seek new homes for ourselves; but this is at an age when, (with one exception,) the emotional part of our nature is, as it were, asleep. Parents, and brothers and sisters, and the companions of our youth, still survive: and young friends flock around us on every side; and, though we know that this hey-day of our lives can not long continue, we utterly fail to realize the nearness or the greatness of the change inevitable, until long after it has come. Then it is, in the ripeness of our existence and from a varied experience, that our thoughts and feelings become mellowed, and higher emotions and a purer sentimentality take possession of our souls; turn us from the all-absorbing topics of the present and its more material advantages, to reflections on the past, and, above all, on the home of our childhood as the type, preëminent, of an eternal rest, and upon its once joyous scenes as the prelude to an immortal youth. Then it is that strange visions of the past begin to haunt us, even in our waking hours, and that in our dreamy dozings we often see and re-mingle with old acquaintances, perhaps long since dead and gone, as we did in the merry scenes of the olden time. Then it is that, yielding to an oft-recurring *Heimweh*, or longing for youth-land, we return, like Harbaugh, to the old home, only to experience a melancholy pleasure as we realize the absence of old associates, and sad changes which Time

has wrought on the face of the picture of what was once our heaven on earth; and with him we sadly sing:—

"How home-like is this spot to me!
I stand and think and gaze!
The buried past unlocks its graves,
While memory o'er my spirit waves
The wand of other days.

* * *

I stand, like Ossian in his vale,
And watch the shadowy train!
Now joy, now sadness me beguile,
And tears will course o'er every smile
And bring the pleasing pain."

And like him, we wend our way slowly homeward along the old, narrow lane, as in the days of our youth; and as we come in sight, we unwittingly listen for the old familiar sound—the hoarse, but friendly voice of old "Tauser," to bark us welcome home. But alas! we are either chilled by a profound silence, or warned by the unfriendly bark of a strange dog. Half startled, strange eyes and faces suspiciously peep at us from behind bowed window-shutters, or around the corners of the house, little dreaming that, in spirit, the place is more *our* home than theirs. Notwithstanding the cold reception, we, half-hesitatingly, cross the threshold, and, once again, seat ourselves beneath the roof that sheltered us in the long, long, ago. We, almost tremblingly, ask permission to enter the different apartments, in the vain hope of recognizing some familiar object, or hearing some familiar sound; we look in vain for the Bible and the Hymn book on the quaint old stand; or the cradle that rocked us in our infancy; we listen for the measured *tick, tick, tick*, or the silvery tones of the old clock, so full of mystery in the peaceful hours of life's rosy dawn. And in their stead we find things new and strange; in the little back room, where our parents slept, and we first saw the light, we find a modern-styled bed in the place of the high posts and ample curtains; no Bible-stand, family Bible, nor hymn-book; and instead of the stately old time-piece, an insignificant mantle-clock, as if running by steam, clicks and clacks, as if trying to make up for lost time. In the spacious old sitting-room, where once we heard the music of the spinning-wheels on the bare, sand-scoured floor, we find the flowery carpets, the melodeon, or the cottage-organ. In the kitchen—that paradise of old-time pleasures,—we find the great old chimney-place, that altar of our youthful sacrifices, where once glowed the cheerful wood-fire, in the long winter evenings of our rustic revelries, closed and dark; and in its stead the modern cook-stove, heated, tamely, with filthy coal. On the garret we find no more the hanks of flax, the rolls of wool, nor the bundles of fragrant herbs; but we *do* find the neglected and despised, cast-off, spinning-wheels, reels and winders hidden away, down in the darkness under the eaves of the roof, as if it were a virtue to show how much the children are ashamed of the homely works and ways of the parents. And so, in sadness, we go away, musing and half doubting whether the works and ways of the present are really *better* than those of the past.

Still, our spirits linger around the place; and the memory of the joyful times and scenes we saw and experienced there, clings to, and follows us like our very shadows. Perchance, we find the place neglect-

ed and fallen into decay. The fences leaning and tottering; the porches paintless and rotten; the once neat and cozy chambers in which we slept the sweet sleep of childhood, and dreamed of a world of bliss in store for us, turned to the commonest uses. O! then, how doubly sad our visit to the old homestead, and how gladly we would, if we could, blot the picture from memory! But no, we cannot; for though there may be no place in this wide world that we would make our home forever, yet, there is a spot on this green earth—

A charm about our native hearth—
The hallowed spot that gave us birth,
From which no fate our hearts can sever.

Perhaps, the quaint old buildings have disappeared and been replaced by new and more modern ones. Everything may betoken cheerfulness and prosperity; the water in the spring may be as clear, and the rivulet as bright and fresh; the old willows or the oaks and sycamores as green and gay, and the songs of the birds among the branches as charmingly sweet as of yore: but we miss the old familiar voices and faces; a certain indescribable sense of loneliness takes possession of our hearts, clouds our spirits, and we sadly soliloquize:

The sun shines as brightly as ever,
And the flowers and fields are as gay;
The songs of the birds are as merry,
But the friends of our youth—where are *they*?

Nay; the New and the Present, may, in every mere utilitarian sense, be ever so superior to the Old and the Past; to the eye the picture may be ever so much more stylish, yet, to the heart it is nothing.

The grander pictures of the old and the past are, somehow and somewhere, so indelibly impressed upon us as to have become a part of our very selves, and we can no more divest ourselves of them than of the faculty of memory itself. More especially so of scenes of amusement and merry employments in which we took part, or, even witnessed in the hey-day of our lives; the hayings, the harvestings, the huskings, the halloweens, the apple-parings, the butter-boilings, the singing-schools, the militia trainings, and the hundred and one tricks and plays, games and sports incident to them all. All these, like so many ghosts from church-yards, come "trooping home" to memory. With Draper, we may well ask:

"Are there, then, contained in the brain, more permanently, as in the retina, more transiently, vestiges of impressions that have been gathered by the sensory organs? The Mind contemplating such pictures of past things and events as have been committed to her custody? In her silent galleries, are there hung micrographs of the living and the dead; of scenes that we have visited; of incidents in which we have borne a part? Are these abiding impressions—actual picture-images, inconsiderably smaller than these made for us by artists, in which, by the aid of a microscope, we can see, in a space not bigger than a pin-hole, a whole family group at a single glance?"*

Yes, and such is Memory! When will Science fully explain the mysteries, or Poetry fitly portray the sweetness of the comforts and pleasures which the contemplation of her mellowed treasures affords to the homesick?

[*Conflict between Religion and Science.]

But, by all this it is not meant that we would, even if we could, turn back the hand of Progress and real improvement, so as to restore the state of things that existed half a century or more ago. All that is claimed or urged is a due respect and veneration for the good old, simple, honest, and more social ways, manners and customs of the past; more especially on account of their inseparable association with *our own* Merry Olden Times. Such, and such only, is the crude, but, as is hoped, truthful picture attempted to be sketched in the following pages, of the home-life of our honest country-folk, as it was within the memory of many still living.

But, (in the modest words ot Whittier,)

"Whether in the glare and tumult of the present time, such a picture will find favor, may well be questioned. I only know that it has beguiled for me some hours of weariness, and that, whatever may be the measure of public appreciation, it has been, to me, its own reward."

To those of the author's more immediate personal friends, who have, from time to time, joined him in many an evening's encouraging social chat and healthful laugh over these and other literary curiosities, he here tenders his sincere thanks, in the fond hope that what may have entertained and amused may never injure or offend.

"Dreary is the time when the flowers of earth are withered;
Dreary is the time when the woodland leaves are cast,
When upon the hill-side all are hardened into iron,
Howling like a wolf, flies the famished blast."

"Dreary are the years when the eyes can look no longer
With delight on Nature, or hope on human kind;
Oh, may those that whiten my temples as they pass me,
Leave the heart unfrozen and spare the cheerful mind."

Mapleshade, West York, Sep. 4th, 1886. H. L. F.

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OLDEN TIMES:

OR,

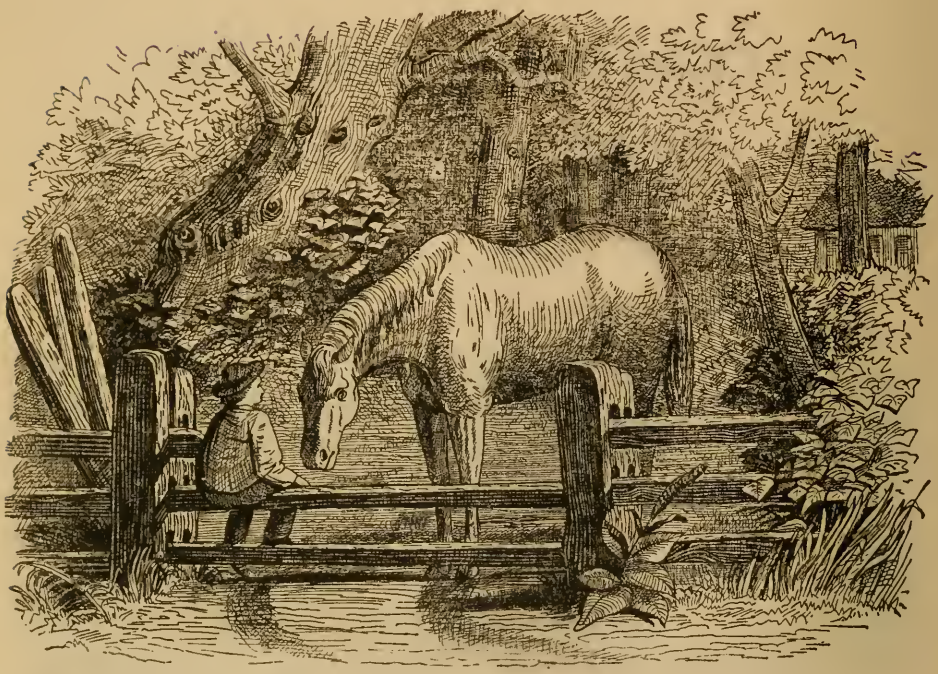
PENNSYLVANIA RURAL LIFE,

SOME FIFTY YEARS AGO.

'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home;
'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming, and look the brighter when we come.

—*Byron.*

I call the old time back ; I bring these lays
To thee, in memory of the summer-days,
When, by our native streams and forest-ways,
We dreamed them over ; while the rivulets made
Songs of their own, and the great pine-trees laid
On warm noon-lights, the masses of their shade.
—*Whittier.*



How often did he meet me there,
And often, there, in patience wait
To take the bridle at the bars,
Or at the homestead gate !

How oft' together jogged to mill
With golden grist in homespun sack—
To smithy, store, and home again
Upon his soft, bare back !

THE OLD HOME.

If, perhaps, these rhymes of mine should
sound not well in strangers' ears,
They have only to bethink them that it
happens so with theirs;
For, so long as words, like mortals, call
a father-land their own,
They will be most highly valued where
they're best and longest known.

—*Longfellow.*

AGE sometimes seems as though it were
Some half-tuned, old-time violin,
Or harp of long neglected strings,
In which our youthland-days begin
To have their sad-toned echoings;
Yet, though life brings less joy than pain,
We fain would live it o'er again.

Often, while musing thus, alone,
Imagination spreads her wings
And carries me to some loved spot,
That gently wakes the slumb'ring strings
To sounds of home-land, half forgot—
Sounds that mean more than need be told
Of home-life's merry days of old.

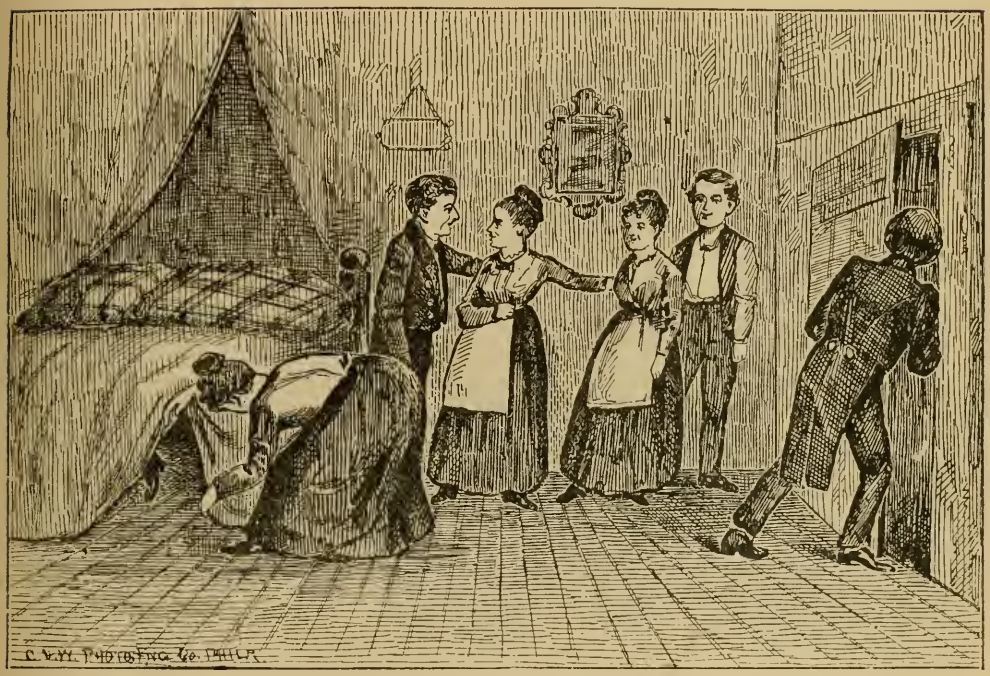
I dream myself back home again,
And of that home I fondly sing
In simple artless, homely rhymes,
The thoughts the idle musings bring—
The dear, departed scenes and times
That come in shadowy shapes once more
In visions of the days of yore.

And who loves not to muse upon
Bright youthland's rural scenes sublime—
The hopes and joys of then and there?
But, ah, alas, the tooth of Time!
Who shall its ravages repair?
In truth, what have the artists wrought,
Save "shadows from the land of thought"?

With pleasing pain we oft' recall
The old home of the days gone by—
And which we only parted from
With heavy heart and moistened eye,
Because it was our *native* home.
How did our hearts with sadness swell
To say that home our last farewell!

There oft' the rustics gathered in,
Freed from the labors of the day,
And helped some old-time tune to sing,
Or joined us in an old-time play
That made the dear old homestead ring
With song and play and joyous mirth
Around the, now, deserted hearth.

A lass whom I remember well—
As fair and free as roe or hind—
I sometimes thought her best she did
To let one know just where to find
The place where she had slyly hid;
She blushed when found but did not care
Who thought or said that was not fair.



Old plumsack was a favorite play
With all those merry girls and boys;
How capital the the punishment,
When, mauger laughter, jest and noise,
A swain before his sweetheart bent,
Submitting, all without offense,
To be chastised on false pretense!

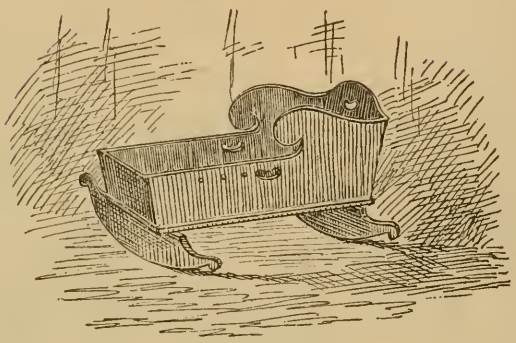
How blissfull was such chastisement—
Divinely like that from above!
'Twas never meant to do one harm—
It was the chastisement of love,
And ever meant to woo and charm;
For in the weapon that chastised
Lurked lover's knot, not much disguised.

The play of plays was blindman's buff,
In which Love groped with bandaged eyes;
Thus, Cupid finds whom he best likes,
And seldom fails to win a prize,
By following where his arrow strikes;
Love does not always walk by sight,
And half believes what is is right.

Too brief the sweet captivity
The willing prisoner underwent;
For, soft and silken were the chains
Of young love's first imprisonment,
And mildly tempered were its pains;
Ah, how we loved and love it still—
Led captive at a woman's will.

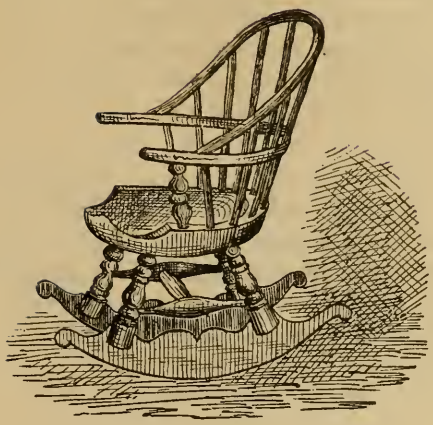
There was the cozy little room
Wherein my eyes first saw the light,
There was the high-post curtained bed
With downy pillows, pure and white
As virgin snow-banks at the head;
The stand, where, in the good old way,
The Bible and the hymnbook lay.

('Tis the common course of man—
Peasant, prince, or slave;
Long life, or but a span—
From the cradle to the grave.)



Such was the little chamber where
Our old-time pious parents slept;
Who doubts that Heaven heard the prayer,
Or that the angels vigils kept
Around that rustic cradle, there?
Angels—the legend said—the same
That watched the Babe of Bethlehem!

And in th' adjoining room I see
The quaint old, rustic, rocking-chair;
The flint-lock gun, the powder horn
And shot-pouch, all just as they were
When by my father used and worn:
And who does not remember well
The old clock's tick and clear-toned bell?



(This is my father's rocking-chair,
In which he rested, free from care ;
Thrice honored be the chair that can
So many years survive the man.)

Methinks I see the blazing hearth
Illuminate the evening scene—
The girls about their various tasks—
And now, as objects intervene,
Grotesque and comic shadowy masks
Are moving back and forward o'er
The dusky walls and oaken floor.

Methinks I hear the morning-call
For boys and girls to wake and rise,
And go about their daily cares ;
I see them, as, with drowsy eyes,
They grope their way adown the stairs—
As, when the wakeful roosters crow,
The drowsy brood moves dull and slow.

One call was all that was required—
Such was the old, parental rule;
And as a rule it was obeyed
As strictly as a rule at school,
By children, hireling, and maid';
Now, often times the rule's reversed,
And parents rise and labor first.

'Twas long before the break of day
On many a frosty winter-morn,'
The stalwart youths geared up their teams
To haul wood, hay, or grain or corn,
In drowsiness and half in dreams:
The only knights of labor then
Were late and early laboring-men.

The girls were always up in time
To cook the early morning-meal;
'Twas eaten by dim candle light,
Yet certain did the eater feel,
(Who ate by faith more than by sight)
That what he saw, or seemed to see,
Was really what it seemed to be.

There hung the rude old iron lamp—
That lurid "light of other days,"
Supplied with grease and cotton-wick,
Snuffed, in so many different ways—
Sometimes with thumb and finger, quick:
How gracefully the vapors rose
And drifted into eyes and nose!

Soon as the frugal meal is o'er
The sturdy team is put enrout;
The Conestoga—heavy load—
Is started, with a lusty shout,
Upon the rugged country-road;
And armed with jackscrew, axe, and whip,
It enters on its urgent trip.

With manly grace the driver mounts
And seizes rein and Loudon whip;
And with a manly grace and pride,
And with a firm and steady grip
He flourishes the old raw-hide,
While foward, yelping, Tauser goes
And, leaping, licks the leader's nose.

Ah! where is, now, that good old dog—
So faithful, watchful, tried and true?
He always knew and kept his place,
And always did his duty, too,
On watch, or trip, or on the chase;
And ever, as he saw me come,
He met and barked me welcome home!

The team is moving slowly on—
On, through the weird and winding glen;
I see it moving round the hill,
Just as I saw it moving then,
Methinks I see it moving, still;
But now, it's passing from my view
As times and friends are passing, too.

How could the task but pleasing be,
Those scenes of home-life to recall?
That peaceful life, its works and plays—
Until we seem to see them all,
Passing again, the same old ways
In panoramic views along,
Waking the dreamy Muse to song.

The household was unbroken, then,
And young and buoyant were their lives;
But now, how does the heart repine,
When one, of all, alone survives,
And, lone, laments the other nine!
Why doth that heart with sadness swell?
Let legends on the tomb-stones tell.

Yet, pleasant is the mystery—
The lone survivor, still, may see
Loved "forms and features multiplied"
In scions of th' ancestral tree,
And own them with becoming pride;
Shall not all these, lost to us here,
Beyond the river reappear?

PIOUS SUPERSTITIONS.

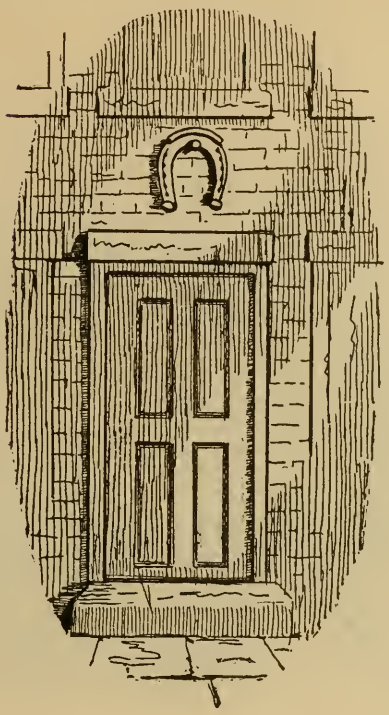
The great eventful Present hides the
Past; but through the din
Of its loud life, hints and echoes from
The life behind steal in;
And the love of home and fireside, and
The legendary rhyme,
Make the task of duty lighter which
The true man owes his time. —WHITTIER.

THOUGH superstitions, old and stale,
Or strange beliefs in false or true,
Mar, rather than adorn the tale,
They, needs, must be recorded, too;
For in them lie much of the lore
And legend of th' unwritten page
Of years gone by, three score or more,
When Faith, not Reason, sat as sage.

But true or false, or whence they came,
We little know and care still less;
Our sires believed them, all the same,
And to believe was to be blest:
The faith-cure all assaults withstood—
A double virtue had each charm—
Costless, and if it did no good,
It certainly could do no harm.

Oft' when the cradle failed to bring
Sleep to a restless infant's eyes,
Did careworn mother cease to sing
And that sweet solace improvise—
An open Bible 'neath its head[4]
She placed, and there the treasure kept,
While one short, fervent, prayer she said,
And lo! her darling sweetly slept.

Thus, elves and witches, gripes, and pains
Were banished, as were doubts and fears,
And pleasantly the thought remains,
To muse us in our riper years:
Who minds not how the whooping-cough
Was cured by breathings from a trout? [2]
The mumps, by rubbing on a trough [3]
Rubbed smooth by swinish neck or snout?



The legendary old horse-shoe—
Quaint charm of good Saint Dunstan's day—
Hung o'er the door or chimney-flue
To keep Beelzebub away:
And I recall the drowsy hour,
When weary youths, in days of yore—
To supplement the horse-shoe's power,
Oft' propped a chair against the door;
(Thus, proving what the scripture saith,
That by our works we show our faith.)

And, as they bade adieu to cares,
Yet hoped those cares again to see,
They said their simple evening prayers,
Learned at a pious mother's knee:
And thus, assurance trebly sure,
The happy urchins slept and snored,
From every evil, now, secure,
Though tempests howled and torrents poured.

That legendary old horse-shoe—
Quaint charm of good Saint Dunstan's day—
That guarded door and chimney-flue
And kept Beelzebub away—
Ah, has its power so much declined,
Satanic influence to prevent,
That when the lucky shoe we find,
'Tis useless, but for ornament?

Have we become so evil-proof,
That spells and charms we need no more
Upon the chimney or the roof,
On portal, window-sill, or door?
Or have we, now, so holy grown—
A race of pious Peter Smiths—
That, safely, we may now disown
The magic power of charms and myths?

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.

Our honest old-time folk believed
That Friday was 'n unlucky day;
And, though they might have been deceived,
No farmer would begin to hay
Or harvest; and no risks were run:
Nor horse nor land was bought or sold,
No distant journey was begun,
On this unlucky day, of old.

No prudent dame would set a hen,
A goose, a turkey, or a duck;
Nor with an even number, when
In odd eggs, only, there was luck:
And why was Friday so esteemed?
I only know, I heard them say,
The reason was, and so it seemed—
Because 'twas hangman's holiday.

Great faith they had in signs and moons
And lucky stars, in days of yore;
The waxing and the waning lunes
Were full of astronomic lore:
The twelve sings of the Zodiac
Told when and what to plant or sow,
And Gruber's old-time almanac
Told just when it would rain or snow.

Old Aries, Taurus, and Leo
Were deemed good signs for size and strength;
There influence was to make things grow
More into solid bulk than length;
While Gemini, Virgo and Pisces
Were favorite ones for beets and beans,
Cucumbers, radishes and peas,
And all the various kinds of greens.

And Libra was the sign for weight,
But Cancer for abundant roots—
Abundant, though but seldom straight,
And ever multiplying shoots:
While Scorpio was the evil thing
In which they did not plant or sow;
Or, if they did, it bore a sting,
And that was all that it would grow.

And there was Sagittarius,
The Archer, with his magic bow
And arrow—all imperious—
Though once a mortal, here, below,
Dread Centaur now; half man half beast,
With ever fire-flashing eyes,
Presiding o'er the huntsman's feast
Yet constellated in the skies.

And, likewise, mystic Capricorn'—
Of fish and flesh, a strange compound;
Of mythologic fancy born—
Involved in mystery profound;
Who planted in these last two signs,
His roots, his cuttings, or his seeds,
Instead of growing fruitful vines,
Would grow a fruitful crop of weeds.

Aquaries, the Waterman,
Presided over clouds and rains;
With his enormous sprinkling-can
He watered gardens, fields and plains:
Things sown or planted in this sign
Would never suffer from a drought,
But grow luxuriously fine—
So hale and hardy, strong and stout.

There was a favorite sign or star
Known to the rural dames of yore—
To set the lees for vinegar,
But ne'er, or, seldom heard of, more:
It was a secret, all profound,
Locked in the bosom of each dame,
And 'though they never talked it round,
Yet each one knew it, all the same.

Into the dusky cask she poured
Three sev'ral kinds of sweet and sour,
Which, soon fomenting discord, war'd—
The stronger on the weaker power;
But always in a waning moon,
And superadded were the names—
Each with a separate, special spoon—
Of three, old, crabbed, scolding dames.

Once, on a time it happened so,
When in this way the lees were set,—
(As all dame antiquarians know)
Three women of Tartarus met
Within the precincts of a barrel,
Wherein they foamed, and fought each other
Till sign and season stopped the quarrel,
By turning all into one *mother*.

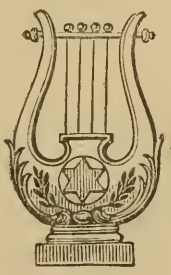
Saint Patrick was the saint of saints
For sowing cabbage-seeds in beds,
And when so sown raised no complaints
Of vermin on the plants or heads;
And if one asked the reason why,
No other did our mothers know
But this, and gave it with a sigh—
"*Our* sainted mothers taught us so."

If ground-hog-day was bright and fair,
The beast came forth, but not to stay;
His shadow turned him to his lair,
Where six weeks more, he dormant lay
Secure in subterranean hold—
So wondrous weatherwise was he—
Against six weeks of ice and cold,
Which, very certain, there would be.

But if the day was otherwise,
So that his shadow was not seen,
Still was the hog more weatherwise
Than any beast had ever been;
He knew that snow and ice would yield
To sunshine, and the birds would sing
In wood and vale and smiling field,
And usher in an early spring.

The Moon, sweet silvery queen of night,
The Sun, high ruler of the day,
Great sov'reignties of heat and light,
Whom winds and waves and tides obey:
Our fathers knew, but cared not how
Each wielded a mysterious power
O'er earth and sea and tree and flower.

A tree cut in a waning moon,
They said would shrink and soon decay;
A tree cut in a waxing moon
Would season well and last for aye;
All things were done by signs and times—
Sometimes 'twould miss—they would confess—
But 'though misled by times and signs
Their faith in them was none the less.



Old-Time Doctors and Old-Time Cures.

WHEN the ever-famous healing art was in its infancy,
It often happened on the score of sheer conveniency,
That the family doctor also doctored, family, horse and cow,
For doctors were much *rarer* then than the rarest of them now.

And the system which they practiced was pure allopathy,
Three lengths ahead of Hahnemann's slow homeopathy,
(For he, with his *similia similibus curantur*
And dose infinitesimal, could only go the canter,)
They always rode on horseback, and gen'rally the gallop,
With saddle-bags and pockets full of calomel and jalap,

And Epsom salts and senna too, and hellebore and borax,
And herbs and teas for stomach-aches, the bowels and the thorax;
And aloes for cathartics mild, and ipecac-emetics,
Peruvian bark in Holland gin for gentle diuretics.

Moreover, they came fully armed with "pullicans" and lance,
For, to cut a vein or pull a tooth they never missed a chance.
With fiery mustard plasters, or with vile cantharides,
Or with devil's dung and opium they gave the patient ease!

If the patient was a clinic, his pulse was promptly felt,
His tongue was next examined and his breath was sometimes smelt;
If not in doubt on diagnose of pulse and breath and tongue,
The doctor got his saddle-bags and the treatment was begun.

If the case was chills and fever, or of trouble in the head,
The first thing to relieve it was to have the patient bled;
And next to have him blistered, just for counter-irritation.
Then twenty grains of mercury for final salivation.

If the patient prayed for water to cool his parched tongue,
They sent and fetched the parson, quick, who prayed for *him* and sung;
If all these didn't kill him, it was not for want of skill,
Nor yet for want of medicine, for of that he had his fill.

By this time his condition, perhaps, was very low,
And the doctors then consulted, to decide what next to do,
(And they generally concluded, it was "best to put him through.")
And, lest anything might happen, the sick man made his will—
If he died, 'twas "providential" and the doctor made his bill.

But, such was the great endurance of the men of olden-time,
That without a life-insurance, they would live to eighty-nine;
Yea, in spite of old-time doctors, ipecac and calomel,
And the parson's *paternosters*, *some* patients would get well.

The blacksmith and the tailor and Saint Crispin's cobbling snob,[5]
By turns each took his turn to do a little healing job;
To let, or check, or stop the blood, or break the spell of witch,
While each one had the *only* salve that would surely cure the itch.

Each was a dental surgeon, but to tell the honest truth,
It often took the "three estates" to pull an aching tooth;
The tailor held the patient's head, the cobbler held his feet,
And the blacksmith pulled the tooth so hard, he landed on his seat.

O, Vulcan, still we honor thee—to thee the fame belongs—
Of improvising dentistry with hammer, punch, and tongs;
And now, behold what better things thy follow'rs have devised—
Our painless teeth in jaws and gums which they have vulcanized!

Then out with every natural tooth—a troublesome mistake—
And give us acci*dental* teeth, that wont decay or ache;
Behold the mouth of wrinkled age—its gracious grins and smiles—
A face almost restored to youth—as cheerful as a child's.

There were hundreds of home-remedies for all kinds of complaints—
All better than the best faith-cure or the prayers of the saints ;
If the children had the measles or the matter was in doubt,
They had to drink sheep-saffron[6] tea to drive the rascals out.

And if a child was liver-grown, or seemed to have a spell,
Three times put through a horse collar[7] would always make it well ;
The blooming youth who freckles had, went on the first of May,
And with the early virgin dew, they washed them all away.

Although a wen was troublesome, it never did much harm,
For, speedily they cured it with the famous old snake-charm ;
They drew the snake by head and tail nine times across the wen,
And as they drew it back and forth, each time they said *Amen !*
Then took the snake and throttled it and wrapped it in oak leaves—
Or else they took and bottled it and laid it 'neath the eaves.

Or, early in the morning, on the next first day of May,
To the nearest country grave-yard did the wen-der wend his way,
And there three times from off the grass, where the last youth buried lay,
He brushed and used the May-day dew to drive the wen away.

Another was the dead-stroke cure—the surest cure of all,
To stroke the wen across the head of a fresh-hanged criminal:
If all these did not cure the wen, they surely did no harm;
And, therein lies the virtue of the faith-cure and the charm.

So, by still other homely means, still other ills were cured,
While yet, with all this homely skill, still others were endured;
But now, O, Esculapius, what wonders do we see!
Since doctors cure by miracles, what need have we of thee?

MILITIA TRAININGS.

FIRST DAY, OR, THE "LITTLE MUSTERING."

FROM these "weak piping times of peace"—
Though they afford us sweeter charms—
From every peaceful scene and art,
From play-ground and from school we part,
To join the rugged school of arms,
For we have reached the ides of May—
Old-time militia training-day.

"In time of peace prepare for war!"
Was brave "old Hickory's" sagelike saw;
So, all sound men, from shops and farms,
Turned out and bravely shouldered arms
According to militia law—
From eighteen years 'till forty-five,
If in good health and still alive.

Would that we could once more behold
The grand old cornstalk-mock-array;
Yes, twice a year, in time of spring
Did every man his weapon bring
And all his martial spunk display,
And answer to the muster-roll,
Or, have a fine put on his poll.

O, well do I remember how
Imposing was the warlike scene!
E'en when, upon *first* training-day,
Each captain drilled his company
In springtime on the village green;
Each warrior for the worst prepared,
And how the women gazed and stared.

Though some were in their uniforms,
No two were uniformed alike;
"No mather for all that," said Pat,
Who wore a herring on his hat,
And Jemmy had a forkéd pike *—
"Thrust God an' keep y'r powdher dry,
An' just a wee dhrap in y'r eye."

And there was Barney MacAleer—
Was born in Ireland,—County Cork;
His hat was old, his coat was new—
Gilt buttons on a longtailed blue—
His gun, a wooden shaking-fork;
That same old fork did Barney wield
At honest work in barn and field.

There, too, was Mike O'Donohue,
That's born in Ireland—County Clare;
And when the captain called the roll,
'Twas he that answered, "by my soul,
Mike 'Donohue himself's not hare,
But, captain, never mind for that,
For, faith, an' here's his brudder Pat."

And there was Jemmy Sullivan
From Ireland—County Donegal,
Where he had never tasted meat,
For that is where the Irish eat
"Parates" wid de skin an' all;
And just before they do begin
They grease their throats with bacon-skin.

And there was dancing Dennis 'Toole,
And noisy Pat O'Slathery;
And Dennis in his martial rig,
Was always ready for a jig,
And Pat was awful blathery;
And neither ever saw the day,
He'd rather fight than run away.

* A pitchfork.

And there was jolly Jim O'Brien,
And bouncing bully Mark O'Maley ;
And they were full of rugged fun,
And swore there was na' better gun
Than twa fut of a good "shelaly ;"
And though they never were uncivil,
A wee bit riled, the'd fight the divil.

But never was there smarter b'y
Than nimble, jolly, jumping Ted ;
To him it was small difference,
Was 't over ditch or over fence,
Or over his own burly head,
(As, once, I heard Tim Reily say,)
If that should chance come in his way.

And last, not least, was Ned O'Neal
Who hailed from ould Kilkenny 'O,
Could hurl, or fight, or dance, or sing
A song or cut a pigeon-wing,
About as well as any 'O;
All these had come and sworn, for aye,
Allegiance to America.

Descendants of the Franks and Swiss,
And others, all as brave as these—
The sons of Germans, Picts, and Scots,
Low Dutch, and Welsh and Hugenots—
Exiles and injured refugees ;
All come for good and all to stay
And fight for free America.

But still more brave and stout than these—
Our native Pennsylvania "Dutch;"
Sons of exiled Palatinates—
Victims of tyrannies and hates—
As quick as powder to the touch
Of fire—rushing from their shops and farms
Responsive to the call "to arms!"

Such was the motley gathering
Upon first training-day in May;
But to the music of the drum
Their hearts all beat in unison
For home and blood-bought liberty;
While red-hot thunderbolts they hurled
Against the tyrants of the world.

Some told most marv'lous stories of
Their fathers and their bravery—
Of how their fathers would have broke'
The cursed chains and galling yoke
Of European slavery;
And after many bloody wars
Found refuge 'neath the stripes and stars.

One had his father's powder-horn,
Another had his trusty gun;
And there were bloodstained bayonets,
Broad swords and dingy epaulets,
Which were bequeathed by sire to son,
And on old garrets stowed away
From traning-day to training-day.

While some there were who mustered in
Their woolen home-spun very-best,
Yet, here and there was one, perchance,
With the paternal coat or pants,
Or, very same ancestral vest,
Or, shoulder-straps, his uncle wore,
At Lundy's Lane or Baltimore.

And some there were, arm'd to the teeth
With rakes and forks and sticks and hoes;
With cornstalks, canes, and jockey-sticks;
With shovel-handles, mattocks, picks,
And surely no one living knows—
Yes, cradle-fingers, snaths of scythes,
And all their wits could improvise.

Such were old-time militia-men,
On old-time training-days in May—
Whose fathers had so bravely fought
With Jackson, Harrison, and Scott,—
And some, they say, had run away,
Distinguished by the races won
At Bladensburg and Washington.

The sergeant shouted "fall in ranks!"
And so they all at once *fell* in,
Obedient to the stern command,
For neither Mike nor Pat could stand
Beneath his heavy load of gin;
And Ned an' Ted an' Jack Magee
Were sanguine-full of sangaree.

Then first lieutenant Swisher cried
Aloud, "*Attention!* company!
Eyes right an' dress; count off by twos,
Mark time, be careful of your toes,
And, also, how you bend the knee—
Left, Left, Left,—Comp'ny halt—
Ther's too much gin an' juice o' malt!"

Then Captain Billy Woods stepp'd up—
To whom the sergeant waved his hand;
The privates, all, like statues stood
And gaped and stared, when Captain Woods,
Now, drew his sword and took command;
Nor was there man durst speak a word,
When Billy drew that mighty sword.

It was a famed Damascus blade,
And of enormous breadth and length;
The scabbard covered o'er with dust—
The blade was covered o'er with rust,
And of enormous weight and strength;
The pond'rous hilt was no less strong
T' uphold the right and smite wrong.

His pants were made of homes-pun drab,
His coat, a very longtailed blue ;
Its waist was half way up his back,
His hat, a bell-crowned gum shellac—
His cow-skin brogans, stiff and new ;
An old red sash, tied round his body,
Where most he felt his whiskey-toddy.

He strutted up and down the line,
To see that all was straight and right—
Inspected every soldier's piece,
Then charged upon a flock of geese,
And put the rascals all to flight ;"
And thereupon he praised his men
For bravery and good "desciplen."

And, now, the drum an fife struck up
And martial colors were displayed ;
No music like the drum and fife,
No colors like the stars and stripes
When such brave men were on parade ;
The captain swore, with all such men,
He'd fight the devil in his den .

The captain always marched his men
To good old patriotic tunes ;
He marched them more than half a mile
By single and by double file,
By columns, round, and square platoons ;
Each stepping to his usual walk
And talking all his usual talk.

And then he marched them to a wood
To meet and fight the Indians, there ;
A savage lurked behind each tree,
But not an Indian could they see,
And dev'lish little did they care,
Since one fight was as good as to'ther
They formed two lines and fought each other.

The "Indian" side took to the trees,
And soon the bloodless fight began;
But Captain Woods, not to be trick'd,
He charged the foe with boyonets fixed—
From which the "Indians" broke and ran;
The Captain and his men ran too—
How else could they the foe pursue?

There was a place called Dismal Swamp,
To which the "savages" had gone;
But Captain Woods, by stratagem—
Maneuvering—surrounded them,
And faith, he captured every one;
Not one on either side was "kilt,"
And not a drop of blood was spilt.

Such was the sham-fight, as 'twas called,
On training-day, first week in May;
'Twas witness'd by the old and young,
And 'tell the truth it was among
The greatest frolics of the day,
When boys were men and men were boys,
And life was brimming o'er with joys.

BATTALION DAY.

"And I have seen—not many months ago--
An eastern Governor in chapeaubras
And military coat, a glorious show!
Ride forth to visit the reviews, and ah!
How oft' he smiled and bowed to Jonathan!
How many hands were shook and votes were won!"
—BRYANT.

A fortnight after this, there came
A great, or, second training-day;
With mixed impatience and delight
We talked by day and dreamed by night
Of that still more august display
Of fuss and feathers, pomp and noise,
Of cakes and beer and girls and boys.

It always was a sunny day—
At least, it very seldom rained;
The water-god seemed gracious, then—
The martial god seemed ruler when
Militia soldiers met and trained;
Nor was there in the year a day
So full of fun, so bright and gay.

Yet, was there much of terror in
An old-time military force;
And I remember with what awe,
When in my tender youth, I saw
A soldier mounted on a horse;
To me, as fearful as Centaur—
When training-day foreshadowed war.

Forth from their own arrondissements
The homespun, rural, heroes came ;
Led by their captains, brave and true,
In uniforms of every hue—
Some not unknown to battle-fame ;
Some that were worn, as said before,
At Bladensburg or Baltimore.

And, chief among them, Billy Woods,
Swinging his shortwaist', longtailed blue ;
Nor was it an unusual thing
For Captain Billy Woods to bring
His burly wife, and children too ;
That wife and children, too, might see
What Billy was, and yet might be.

In motley crowds they gathered 'round
The old-time village tavern-stand—
A harvest for the village inn,
Since strong-beer, whiskey, rum and gin
Were always largely in—*command ;*
And hearts and hands and hats rose higher
With cheers around the bar-room fire.

Alas, with cheers around the fire—
Upon a frosty morn' in May,
The brave and true militia-men
No more respond as they did then—
On first or second training-day ;
No more do inn and training-ground,
As then, with martial strains resound.

No music to militia ears
Had such inspiring, syren charms ;
As early as the break of day
Was heard the stirring *reveillé*,
And then the rattling rush to arms !
To flint-lock shot-gun, fork and pike,
To broomstick, cornstalk and—the like.

They marched and marched and countermarched
From inn to inn in groups and squads,
To marches played on drum and fife,
In strains that might have waked to life
The sleeping mythologic gods;
Inspired by bold John Barleycorn,
They'd fight, or laugh all foes to scorn.

At length, on prancing chargers came
The stately Generals in command,
With buttons, gauntlets, stars, rosettes,
With glittering swords and epaulettes,
Escorted by the village band;
And O, the lace of golden threads,
And *chapeaubras* upon their heads!

Let me the picture here condense
And paint it forth in fewer words;
Their splendid buff-trimmed, blue cloth suits—
Their brass-spurred military boots—
Their waving plumes and glittering swords
And horses decked as fine as they,
Made the grand feature of the day.

In breathless silence there, the crowd
Of anxious rustics stood around—
Surprised, astounded and amazed,
They gaped and stared, admired and gazed,
In blissful ignorance profound,
That every boy was happier than
Though *he* had been so great a man.

With something of a sense of awe,
Like that inspired by mighty Jove,
We, urchins viewed those valiant knights—
Those champions of the people's rights—
As some great beings* from above
As in the ancient Trojan wars
They looked on Hector, Jove, and Mars.

*As of a superior race of beings.

Dismounted, they, with pompous step
Retired into their lodging rooms
To make their toilets and prepare
To "charge"—upon the bounteous fare—
While, by the hostlers—dusky grooms—
Their prancing, chafing steeds were led
Back, to be watered, groomed and fed.

Meantime, the sergeants formed their men
By skilful movements, most superb;
Each brave recruit, to save his fine,
Prompt, at the word, fell into line,
Along a wagon-rut or curb;
They ranked and sized expert and deft,
Then counted off from right to left.

The sergeants formed them into ranks,
And from the ranks into platoons;
And by platoons they marched along,
Some stepping right, some stepping wrong
To old-time merry marching tunes—
To tunes that never failed t' inspire,
Or set a soldier's heart on fire.

The patriotic marches that
Were played on old-time training-day
Though muffled in the maze of years,
Still echo faintly in my ears,
And with recurring ides of May,
The martial pageant with the sound,
Still, as of yore, comes marching round.

No sight that ever rustic saw
Perhaps, was so supremely grand;
I see the streets as I did then,
All gay with armed militia-men—
I seem to hear the stern command
From officers, all at their posts,
Resounding through the serried hosts.

No day in all our youthful years
So roused the genial martial fire ;
The women left their work half done—
Turned out and went to see the fun,
All heedless of both dust and mire ;
And where from dangers and alarms
So safe as in their husbands' *arms ?*

The boys, the patriotic boys !
Abundant, ever, in resource—
With coffee-pots for kettle-drums—
With plumes and epaulettes of thrums,
And wooden guns and swords, of course—
In paper uniforms turned out
And put the village-geese to rout.

A soldier-boy with paper cap,—
A fancied future Washington,
Who fought and battled for the right
And put the feathered flocks to flight
Rejoiced in laurels bravely won,
And wore them just as proudly, too,
As Sheridan and Sherman do.

Meantime the generals reappeared
Upon their proud and lofty steeds :
In martial pomp so gay and fine,
They rode along the waiting line,
Ready for high and daring deeds;
While the brave hosts from shops and farms.
At the command, presented arms.

These were the men of high renown,
As worthy, valiant, and as bold
As David's chosen thirty-seven,
Whose names the holy seer has given
In sacred chronicles of old ;
Who, at their leader's high command,
Smote the Philistines hand to hand.

But, all too grand my subject is
For this tame, dull, descriptive style
So, if from plodding in the dust,
I try to rise and soar, I trust
The patient reader will not smile,
If, of my subject, what remains,
I sing in more heroic strains.

Then, see them posted on the distant right,—
Their tinsel glittering in the morning-light;
Now, with them are the brave and fierce dragoons,
With bobtailed coats and skin-tight pantaloons;
Their heads in helmets of rich brazen mail,
And from each helmet hangs a horse's tail.
They came like locusts in the locust years,
Armed with bright helmets, sabres, swords and spears;
Great flint-lock pistols in their holsters, too,
All ready for inspection and review;
Proud of his trappings, every horse appears,
With fiery eye, curved neck and restless ears.
Near by, the drum-corps and the full brass band,
And in the midst the waving colors stand.
Elbow to elbow, and in rapid time,
The color-bearers march half down the line,
And halting there, at the appointed place,
To right or left they wheel and centre face;
Upon the colonel, now, their eyes are bent,
And at his word, again, their arms present;
The whole battalion, now, of brave recruits,
The colonel with his full-drawn sword salutes;
To right and left the color-bearers pass,
Each, now, in line to take his proper place.
The rustic heroes, from their shops and farms,
Obey the loud command and shoulder arms;
The great battalion, having thus been formed,
Enrolled, equipped, aligned, and fully armed,
By evolutions and maneuvres wheeled
To march by columns to the training-field;
Ready to march, the impatient soldiers stand,
'Waiting their valiant brigadier's command;
Which giv'n, the captains pass it down the line,
While swords and sabres flash, and gleam and shine.
The flags, all bloodless of a battle's brunt,

Move forward now and wave upon the front :
In silken folds the starry fields of blue,
In streaming stripes, the glorious bunting, too,
And from a banner in the midst, unrolled,
The Arms of State in splendid blue and gold :
Upon a broad and ample, stately shield—
A broad and ample space of sea and field,
The generous sea the sandy sea-shore laves,
And busy Commerce plows the distant waves :
So Agriculture, with her rugged plow,
Turns the rude furrow like the vessel's prow ;
While all around her, o'er the fertile land,
The bowing sheaves in mild submission stand :
On either side a graceful, rampant steed—
The noble type of beauty, strength and speed ;
Above, and over all these goodly things,
The bird of freedom spreads his ample wings
Such worthy emblems, may I say, as these,
Might grace the shield of angry Achilles?

Meantime, the whole battalion forward moves,
And with each step its marching skill improves ;
Delight and wonder ! what a fine display
Of pomp and pitchforks on a training-day !
The air resounding with discordant tunes,
The neighing chargers of the fierce dragoons ;
Their clattering hoofs upon the solid street,
The fifes' shrill screaming and the drums' loud beat;
The colors flying in the stiff'ning breeze,
The piping birds among the leafing trees,
The willow-whistles of the merry boys,
The barking dogs and—every other noise.
Few were so sick, but they could "get about"
And see the "corn-stalk militia" turn out.
It was in barking-*time*, and many a load,
Drawn by militia team, was on the road ;
A youngster took a load of bark to town,
Went to the circus and enjoyed the clown ;
Or if, perchance, it was on training-day,
Spent his loose change in some more noble way—
For "belly-guts"* and kisses, cakes and beer,
A ring or ribbon, as a sweet *souvenir*,

* The popular name for taffy in those days.

To sweeten the heart of his bonny dear.
It was the time when farmers planted corn,
When geese were plucked and fleecy sheep were shorn.
The handiest arm a raw recruit could bring,
Was a shovel, a hoe, or some such thing;
So, some had shovels and others had hoes,
Some, corns on their feet and some on their toes—
A soil where such corns ever took deep root
And flourished the better for a villainous boot:
But what was all that to Jamy or Pat,
With a "dhrap" in his head and pipe in his hat?

So marched the soldiers to the training-ground,
To drum and fife and merry bugle-sound;
And there each captain with a wondrous skill,
Put each man through the regulation-drill.

The first thing that he drilled them in
Was soldierly *position;*
Excelsior in everything
Was part of his ambition.

He drilled their eyes from *right* to *left*—
From *left* to *right* and *front;*
And he that drilled his men the best
Was Captain De La'Hunt.

He put them through the various *steps*—
Front, *right* and *left oblique*,
And O! the *cadence* of those steps—
'Twas perfect, grand, *unique*.

So many inches to the step—
Just eight and twenty in it;
And just exactly ninety stept
A soldier to the minute.

They *shouldered* arms, they *carried* arms,
They *ordered* arms, and some
Went through the manual of arms
To taps upon the drum.

They loaded by the *twelve commands*,
With only this direction ;
They *opened*, *primed*, and *shut* their *pans*,
And did it to perfection.

They *cast about*, they *faced about*,
They loaded, aimed and fired ;
They *wheeled* about and *turned* about,
Advanced, and then *retired*.

They fired *front*, they fired *rear*,
And *right* and *left oblique ;*
And all the girls began to cheer—
'Twas done so very "sleek."

They fired off by companies,
By files and by platoons,
Some fired resting on their knees
And burst their pantaloons.

Nine, out of ten men had no gun
To *prime*, to *load* or *aim*,
Yet strange to say that, ten to one,
They did it all the same.

They *forward marched* and *countermarched*—
Lock-step and *double-quick*,
They formed platoons upon the march,
To *right* and *left oblique*.

UNITED WE STAND

They trailed their arms, they piled their arms
And took their arms again ;
Supported arms and carried arms,
Like brave militia-men.

The generals, came riding by—
Each mounted on a stallion,
And with a stern and searching eye,
Reviewed the whole battalion.

Then, at a little distance, and
Upon an elevation,
The gallant generals took a stand
And held a consultation.

The whole battalion, then, in line,
By company and section,
Stood facing front, all well aligned,
And ready for inspection.

Brigade inspector Wallace, then,
Dismounted and proceeded—
Inspecting arms as well as men,
And told them what was needed.

The soldiers pitched their arms to him—
Each from his own position ;
And he, upon inspecting them,
Found all in good condition.

He said he was a liberal man,
And wouldn't stand for trifles,—
Their farming-tools were better than
Their shot-guns or their rifles.

And having, thus, inspected them—
Men, arms, and ammunition,
He pitched each weapon back again
Into its first position.

Then mounted he his steed again,
'Mid cheers and roar and rattle,
And proudly looked down on his men—
All eager for the battle.

Then brave old General Jimmy Burns[8]
Sent scouts to left and right, sir;
But disappointed, they returned—
"No enemy in sight, sir."

So, then he formed two battle-lines—
Sons of the selfsame mother,
And so, they were not much inclined
To fight and kill each other.

But still, they made a charge or two
To please their old commander,
Much like the boys who fought and slew
That selfsame sturdy gander.

(How little thought they at that day—
That mimic fight, fraternal,
Would ever change from sham and play
To civil war, infernal!)

And when the mimic fight was done—
Of real war, a token—
A many a bloodless shirt was torn
And many a corn-stalk broken.

So, then, the gen'rals, gay and grand,
According to the drill, sir,
Took charge and marched the whole command
Three times around the hill, sir.

How gay they marched, what time they kept!
And did it all so grandly,
Because the march to which they step't,
Was "Yankee Doodle dandy."

The last time they marched 'round the hill
They gave three hearty cheers, sir,
And then the old militia-drill
Became a little queer, sir.

There stood a wood upon their flanks,
In which the foe appeared, sir,
And sallied forth in martial ranks,
And hung upon their rear, sir.

And such a foe as that was, Oh!
Impossible to tell, sir,—
Was it a masked militia foe,
Or devils out o' hell, sir?

As if by magic,—or the gods
Had formed a new creation,
They swarmed in hordes from out the woods
With fearful consternation.

Some looked like demons, ghosts or ghouls
From rural fens and ditches;
Some looked like monstrous hornéd owls
And some like hellish witches.

An elephant of monstrous size
Bestrided by a *small* man,
A dwarfish donkey, looking wise,
Bestrided by a *tall* man.

The pigmy on Van Amburg's back,[9]
Of course, was chief commander;
The giant riding on the jack
Was General Alexander.[10]

The gallant general and his men,
While marching 'round the hill, sir,
By accident (?) at last became
Entangled in the drill, sir.

Armed to their teeth with pikes and picks,
Shot-guns and ammunition—
Dung-forks, tongue-jacks and jockey-sticks—
They held their own position.

And then they formed two fighting lines,
In grand array of battle,
And charged each other several times
Like droves of hornéd cattle.

They charged with sword and bayonet,
And some pulled off their coats, there;
And Pat Maloney tried to get
Tim Murphy by "de troat," there.

They pulled and hauled, they puffed and blew
And pushed each other round, there;
They woolled and mauled, they thrust and threw
Each other on the ground, there.

The light horse men were ordered up,
And soon the bugle sounded,
But Pat and Tim would ne'er give up
'Till both their heads were pounded.

The birthright of an Irishman—
As every bodyknows, sir,—
Is gloriously asserted when
He peels another's nose, sir.

'Twixt reg'lar and fantasticle,
In all parts of the field, then,
'Twixt reg'lar and fantasticle,
And neither side would yield, then.

At length, Tim Murphy quit the fray
And jumped upon a stallion,
And swore if they'd show *him* fair play
He'd "whip" the whole battalion.

When all the Irish heard it, then,
They quit the reg'lar forces,—
They charged upon the light horse men
And tried to take their horses.

Full many a charger there took fright
And galloped down the hill, sir,
And lost his rider in his flight,
Like bags when going to mill, sir.

The Irish gave the horses chase,
The horses jumped the fences,
The Keystone-dutch joined in the race
Of frauds and false pretences.

In all this fight and fearful run—
In truth I'm bound to say, too,
The elephant, all unconcerned,
Was eating grass snd hay, too.

The dwarf who sat upon his back
Surveyed the field through glassses,
And said the lighthorse were a pack
Of undis*cip*lined asses.

He thrust his huge spurs in his sides
And tried to get him started,
But "Van" and hay, to his surprise,
Were not so lightly parted.

In view of all these great events,
The people cheered and shouted—
The fierce dragoons had jumpt the fence,
Completely whipt and routed.

The only steeds that stood their ground—
Van Amburg and the donkey—
The light horse men were lying 'round
Completely *hors de combat.*

The elephant stood by his hay
As men stand by their guns, sir,
The cavalry had run away,
And there came in the fun, sir.

The light horse men then took command—
The robust Keystone farmer,—
But ne'er a plowman's horse would stand
To fight those "ghosts in armor."

J.W. CAUGHEY, PITTSBURGH, PA.

Or, in a style more orthodox,
I'll say "it came to pass," there,
That man and horse, like ass and ox,
Together went to grass, there.

Meantime, the situation was
Confusion-worse-confounded,
Nor could the general count his loss
In prisoners, dead, and wounded.

He called his staff around, to plan,
And asked "what's to be done, sirs?"
To which they answered, to a man,
"Best take it all in fun, sirs"

At first, the general hung his head
And seemed a little nervous;
Then, with great emphasis he said—
"*Demoralize the service?*"

While brooding o'er, with tearful eyes,
His Waterloo defeat, there,
Amazed—saw dead and wounded rise
And stand upon their feet, there.

Well might the gen'ral now suspect
There had been some collusion;
Investigation proved correct—
He came to that conclusion.

He put the traitors in a place
And held them under guard, too;
But when he came to prove his case
He found it rather hard to.

The pigmy on the elephant,
The giant on the donkey,
And all the girls were looking at
The organ-man and monkey.

The organ-grinder played a tune,
The while his monkey danced it;
The tune he played was "Old Zip Coon"—
The gen'ral's horse, he pranced it.

The organ-grinder, like a man,
Stood firmly by his crank, sir,
But nearly all the gen'ral's men,
They broke and left the ranks, sir.

They gathered round the organ-boss
And handed in their money,
And soon the situation was
Becoming rather funny.

The grinder ground, the monkey danced
The more the flunkies paid them,
The horses leaped and pitched and pranced
The more the grinder played them.

Girls, men, and boys joined in the dance—
'Mid laughter, mirth and cheering,
The general forgot, by chance,
All thought of interfering.

The mock-parade withdrew, and then
Retreated to the woods, sir,
The general reformed his men
And did the best he could, sir.

He marched them once more round the hill
And viewed the awful pillage,
And then he marched them from the field
Straight back into the village.

But soon he found, to his surprise,
What seemed a little queer, now;
Fantasticals in full disguise
Were hanging on his rear, now!

He marched his men all round the town
And looked so brave and daring;
And then the people gathered 'round
To hear the gen'ral swearing.

The dwarf upon the elephant,
The giant on the donkey,
The organ-grinder at his crank,
The gen'ral and his flunky.

The gen'ral swore that training had
Come to a pretty level—
He swore that caste and order had
At last gone to the devil.

He warned his men and threatened them
Of what they might "expect, sirs,"
If ever they presumed again
"To show such disrespect, sirs."

He said that such a mock-display
Demoralized the service,
And if allowed to have its way,
Why, then, "good Lord, preserve us!"

He said our liberties depended
Upon our state militia,
But if by such as they defended,
It looked a little "fishy."

The band played Yankeedoodle, then,
The generals took some brandy,
And, finally dismissed their men,
To Yankeedoodledandy.

These were the sires of many loyal sons,
Within whose veins the blood of freemen runs,
Who, when, erewhile, their country called to arms,
Like their brave sires, they left their shops and farms,
As ready, at their country's call to go
And fight a rebel as a foreign foe.
Far from their homes, their children, and their wives,
For home and country sacrificed their lives;
Such were our brave, old-time militia-men—
The honored heroes of my humble pen.

HAYING.

"Now swarms the village o'er the jovial mead:
The rustic youth, brown with meridian toil,
Healthful and strong; full as the summer-rose
Blown by prevailing suns, the ruddy maid,
Half naked, swelling on the sight, and all
Her kindred graces burning o'er her cheek.
E'en stooping Age is here; and infant hands
Trail the long rake, or, with the fragrant load
O'ercharged, amid the kind oppression roll."

"Or, as they rake the green-appearing ground,
And drive the dusky wave along the mead,
The russet hay-cock rises thick behind
In order gay. While heard from dale to dale,
Waking the breeze, resounds the blended voice
Of happy labor, love and social glee."

—Thomson's Seasons.

NOW, turn we from those warlike scenes
To gentle Peace and her pursuits;
To haying and to harvest-fields,
Where Ceres to her votaries yields
Her richer and her nobler fruits;
Nobler the fields all strewn with grain
Than fields strewn with the battle-slain.

Yea, to the fields so picturesque
With swaths of new-mown, fragrant, hay,
And with the merry company
A' haying in their highest glee,
The good old fashioned, plodding way;
The rustic pageant moves along
To merry jest and jovial song.

Sweet are the odors, as they come,
Breathed softly on the summer-breeze;
Sweet are the songs of summer-birds,
The tinkling bells of grazing herds,
And the low buzzing of the bees;
And sweeter, far, the hay-girl's hum
Than bugle-notes or martial drum.

The mowers, now, I see in ranks.
And as they swing their gleaming blades,
They urge their leader, stroke by stroke,
Still, as they near the sturdy oak,
Spreading his dark and cooling shades;
Where, neath the bush, "Black Betty" stands,
And water for the haying hands.

In that refreshing shade, as then,
Methinks I hear the hayers' song—
Quenching their thirst from cocoa-shell
With *pure*, fresh water from the well,
Or, from the never-failing spring;
While over head, or far away,
The meadow-lark sings blithe and gay.

Sweet is the hayers' rest, but brief—
For sunshine-work brooks no delay;
As, promptly from his grassy seat,
The leader rises to his feet,
His sturdy followers obey,
And to their feet as promptly rise,
Each leaning on his trusty scythe.

And now, the leader, with a queer
Suggestive twinkle of his eye,
His "krumkrick" draws forth from the horn,
In old-time by the mower worn
Suspended from his rugged thigh;
And, as the leader draws his stone
Each sturdy follower draws his own.

A moment's pause; they, waiting stand,
For him to give the signal note;
And, one by one, each whets and sings,
While from each scythe the music rings,
And hills and dales near and remote
Reëcho back, both loud and long,
The sounding scythe and mowers' song.

Again the mowers are in line—
Each man is in his proper place;
Their leader, as if in command,
Assumes his place and waves his hand
With pride and, yet, becoming grace;
They stand at ease and look askance
To catch the signal to advance.

The signal giv'n, they all strike in,
Harmoniously, as though but one;
No music-master e'er beat time,
Nor was there ever rhyme or chime
That rung in grander unison,
Or more harmonious, deft and lithe
Than old-time mowers swung the scythe.

Behold the brawny, sunburnt arms,
The stalwart, loosely girded waists—
How every vein stands out with blood,
And how the ardent, crimson flood
Glows ruddy in each honest face,
So purposed now; and, even, how
The sweat pours from each honest brow.

Like soldiers on a battle-field—
Unconscious of the mighty strain,
See naught but glory in the fight,
While battling only for the right,
And not for fame or sordid gain:
An old-time mower's least concern
Was,—how much *money* he should earn.

To merry hearts of olden time,
The harvest work was but as play:
Hark! from the hindmost in the race—
"All push the leader! give him chase!
All Push him! push him! push away!"
All save the leader join the cry—
"Oh! push the leader, hip-an'-thigh!"

The hardy haying girls and boys,
While turning o'er the lusty swaths,
Join in the merry hue-and-cry—
"Oh! push the leader, hip-an,-thigh!"
And thus they swell the wild applause—
Rending the air with shout on shout
And cheers for him who first gets out.

He who was last is now the first—
Behold the clean-cut avenue!
On either side a waving wall
Of grass, still standing, green and tall,
Along the long and weary through;
And now, o'er fertile fields of corn
Is heard the welcome noon-day horn.

As, one by one, they reach the end—
The vanquished leader last of all—
The merriment runs wild and high;
They smell the fresh-baked cherry-pie
That scents the timely dinner-call,
And many a merry song and jest
Seasons the hay-day feast and rest.

Soon noon-day feast and rest are o'er—
How swift the shady hour has passed!
And now, again, the mowers stand,
Refreshed and rested, scythes in hand,
Before the doomed and waiting grass,
Whose day is spent—whose time has come
To be cut down and gathered home.

The mower who was last is first,—
His place by merit fairly won;
How cheerful is his ruddy face!
He and the leader changing place
Is deemed the very best of fun;
Such simple customs, we shall find,
Were deemed good law, time out of mind.

Ah! who would not bring back again
The dew of youth—the morn' of life?
The days that only dawned to bless—
When life itself was happiness,
So free from trouble, care and strife;
What lord would not return again,
And be the monarch he was then?

A few more days of clear, blue sky—
Of bright and genial summer-sun,
To cheer us on our homeward way,
And, like the hayers' busy day,
Life's weary task will have been done,
And we, and all, both great and small,
Like grass, before Time's scythe shall fall.

GOING TO MILL, ANGLING, &c.

"Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,
When Youth itself survives young Love and joy?
Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,
Death hath but little left him to destroy!
Ah! happy years! once more who would not be a boy?"
—Byron.

WAS ever happier boy than I
When going to mill on honest Tom—
(So by brevet—the family nag—)
Perched high upon the homespun bag
Of grain, or, when hastening home
At old-time speed—a mile an hour—
With well-tolled grist of bran and flour?

The miller was an honest man—
I often heard my father say
The miller's hogs were always fat;
His cow was smooth and sleek, but that
Was *every* honest miller's way;
And so his patrons smiled and said,
But never knew whose grain he fed.

Such talk about another might
Create a very doubtful fame;—
In earnest or in jest; yet, still,
That old-time miller and his mill
Both bore a very honest name;
Nor *would* the miller sell his soul
To Satan, for a dish of toll.

One thing I know, nor can forget—
His kindness often shown to me ;
How, when I came in summer-time,
He lent me rod and hook and line,
And there, beneath the willow tree,
I'd sit and sing and bait my hook,
And angle in the sparkling brook,

The while the grist was going down—
And O, how short the hour was then !
The muffled music of the mill—
Methinks, almost, I hear it still ;
The robin, bluebird, and the wren ;
And there, among the docks and bogs,
The croaking of the lazy frogs.

And, once, when fishing in the dam—
Ah ! well do I remember, now—
My hook got fast among the docks
In that deep hole, below the rocks ;
And well do I remember how
I tried and tried—but all in vain,
Until the good old miller came.

He got his boat and paddled out
To where the treacherous hook was fast ;
He took his rude old steering-pole
And pushed it deep, down, in the hole—
Ah ! then how slow the moments passed !
At last, how happy did I feel,
When up came hook fast to an eel !

The miller shouted, "pull ! my boy,"
I pulled,—I did—with all my might ;
My courage rose with the demand—
Full bent I was that eel to land,
And then, to risk another bite ;
Alas ! by using *too* much force,
I shifted things from bad to worse.

High, on a bending willow-limb,
A'wriggling hung that slimy eel ;
The miller quickly climbed the tree
And cut the wriggler down for me,
And then and there beneath my heel,
Firm set athwart her pin-head eyes,
I tried to hold my slipp'ry prize.

But all in vain, the slimy beast
Among the weeds a'wriggling went
A'down the steep and grassy sward,
Instinctively inclined toward
Her native, watery, element ;
And from the tree I heard a call—
"She's gone, with hook an' line an' all!"

Again the trusty rod I seized
And pulled, and pulled, with all my might :
The miller shouted from the tree—
"Now, look! be careful! watch! now, *see*!
Ah! now, there, now, you've done it right!"
There, on the grassy bank, still fast,
Lay eel, rod, hook, and line, at last.

But to her native instincts true—
Her natural rights she seemed to know—
Again she headed for the stream,
And I began to shout and scream,
Half scared, half bent to let her go ;
The miller then began to shout,
"Quick! grab the *line*, an' pull 'er out!"

And so I did, and panting, ran,
With rod and line and eel in hand,
Back, from the water's edge, apace,
Where, luckily, I found a place
All flooded o'er with soil and sand ;
Where, first, to my rurprise, I found,
How far the hook was swallowed down.

But, when the good old miller came—
A' panting, too, for want of breath—
The eel was wriggling in the sand;
The miller came with knife in hand,
Full bent upon the wriggler's death—
With grin, grit, and determined look—
And, with his knife, cut out the hook.

How big the eel? makes little odds,
A twofold boyish joy was mine—
Though foolishly I had behaved,
Yet, still, the miller's hook was saved,
Besides, intact, were rod and line;
Nor had I ever felt so big,
As with that eel strung on a twig.

Yes, by the good old miller's side,
I felt as big as any *man*,
And proud, alike, of luck and skill,
I hurried back, down, to the mill
To get my grist of flour and bran;
And then, 'stride Tom, with grist and eel,
Did ever mortal happier feel?

Jog, jog, we went with sack and pack—
Our backs now turned upon the mill;
While Tom kept step to some old tune—
'Lang Syne, or, maybe, Old Zip Coon,
A singing up the long, steep hill;
But, lo! when we had reached the height,
Fresh troubles broke upon my sight.

There came my mother in pursuit
Of her, long absent, truant boy;
Harassed with many doubts and fears,
Her eyes suffused with gath'ring tears—
But what, O, what was now her joy!
And what, O, what a joy was mine,
When I escaped the "cat o'nine"!

At first she gave me sharp reproofs
And then she threaten'd me severe ;
In haste, I cunningly explained
The luck I had, and how detained—
In joy, exclaiming, "just look here ! "
And, as, in doubt, I showed my prize,
She wiped the tear-drops from her eyes.

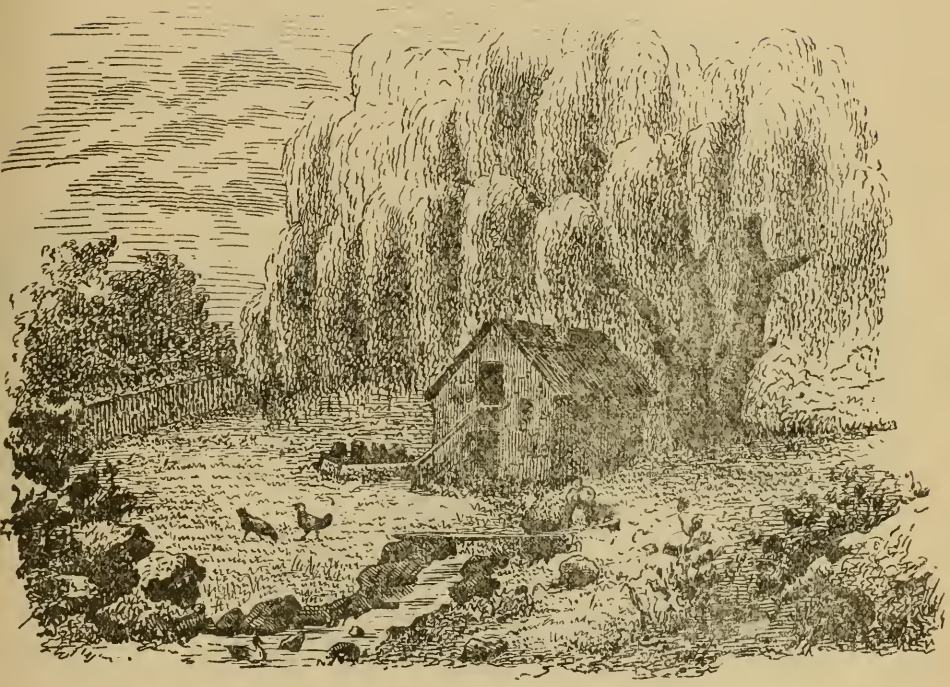
But, only on good promises
I then escaped the dreaded rod !
And Tom, as if to reconcile
A mother to an erring child,
Added his ever friendly nod ;
Old "Tauser," too, as if to help,
Gave, now and then, a friendly yelp.

Old Tauser used to follow me
In all the trips I went upon ;
In trouble, Tauser was my friend,
And ready his kind help to lend
And so was good old faithful Tom ;
Still, half afraid, I would be flogged—
We, all, together homeward jogged.

And, as we jogged, I told it o'er
Again to mother, by the way ;
How I got fast, but caught the eel ;
How quick she slipped from 'neath my heel,
And how I came to stay and stay ;
And how the miller kindly came
And helped me to secure my game.

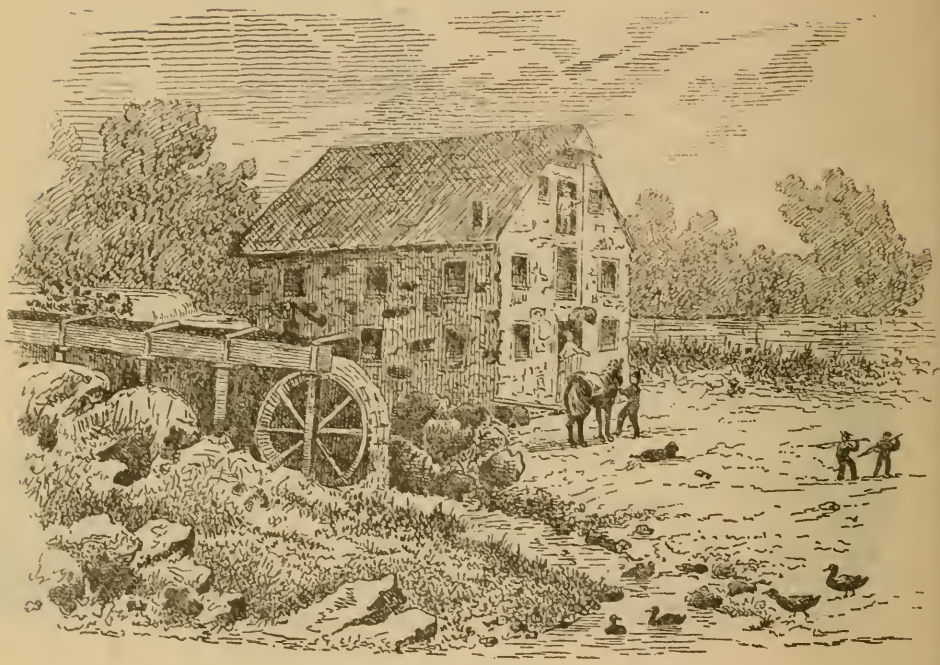
And when, at last, arrived at home—
A mile seemed as if *three* miles then—
So heavily the minutes moved,
So painfully I felt reproved,
I felt as though it might be *ten ;*
But when I saw my father's face,
I felt assured there still was grace.

And now, to cut the matter short—
Upon the honor of a man,—
That slippery, that immortal eel,
Though skinned and fried in lard and meal,
Still writhed and wriggled in the pan!
So now, with pleasure, let us hail
The end o' this part of the tale.



The Old, Old Mill, And The Miller.

"How lightly the water dances—
How sparkles its crystal breast!
As each arrow of sunlight glances
In quivering, gay, unrest;
And the dewy morning breathing,
Tenderly touching, now,
Silvery hair enwreathing
An aged, though cheerful brow;
For many years that are gone and dead,
The mill has echoed his gentle tread."



"And long may it echo the paces
Of the feet that are walking toward
The golden gates of the city,
Leading to home and God.
O! chide me not if I carry
Sweet memories, as I roam,
Of the old-time mill in the valley
And the sweetly embowered home.
And with sad regrets my song I'll fill
And a fond farewell to that dear old mill!"

BUT let us to the mill return,
For, still, fond memory lingers there;
Among the grand old willow trees,
How deep the shade, how mild the breeze,
How soft and balmy was the air!
Where, on the green we sat and made
Our willow-whistles, in the shade.

There stood the ancient sycamores
Upon the "bonny" banks and "braes;"
There, in the spring of life and years,
When life was free from cares and fears,
How smoothly glided, then, our days—
Free from the troubles pains and cares
Which, later on, so frost our hairs.

While we our rustic hautboys tuned
And piped and sang our songs of love,
How did our youthful hearts rejoice,
As, overhead, we heard the voice
Of mocking-bird and plaintive dove!
And, as we sat and piped and sang,
From feather'd throats the chorus rang.

Sometimes we sauntered through the mill
To see the greater wonders there;
The garner'd heaps from fertile fields,
The grinning cogs on whirring wheels
That whirred and rumbled everywhere;
Nor was there e'en a moment's rest
From thudding in the bolting-chest.

And on that chest, in chalk or keel,
Or carved with rustic pocket knives,
Were records of the millers' names
With hieroglyphics, tricks and games,
Laconic legends of their lives,
And many a curious autograph,
Illegible—well, more than half.

But, still, the unsolved mystery
To us was what we heard within;
How curious were we girls and boys,
To see what made that curious noise
In that old carved and dusty bin!
And O! what youthful joy and glee,
When, once, the miller let us see!

He opened wide the pond'rous lid,
And kindly lifted, one by one,
The anxious group of juveniles,
With dancing eyes and happy smiles,
Until the least and humblest one
The wonderful, unique machine,
Had, by the miller's kindness, seen.

Upon the old-time miller's scales,
He also put us, one by one;
As to and fro, the balance sway'd,
He told us, each, how much we weighed,
And O, how we enjoyed the fun!
And how the girls would shout and scream
As each, fat, plump one, tipped the beam.

And then, each rustic tried to lift
The great, the pondrous fifty-six;
We asked the miller what it weighed,
And how the wondrous thing was made;
And when we knew, we played our tricks,
And up and down the dusty stair
"And in and out and everywhere."

The miller had a little room—
A nook, there, on the second floor;
And there he had a rustic bed,
To rest his weary limbs and head;
And, let me, let me—think, what more?
A huge, old fashioned ten-plate stove,
Bearing the legend of "Pine Grove."

A desk, a crow-bar, and an axe;
An old-time flint-lock gun or two;
Old lanterns, lamps, and candlesticks,
Old pincers, hammers, mill burr-picks—
Old iron—half a ton or two;
Three—four steel traps, an oaken bench,
A jackscrew, and a screw-tap wrench.

I think he had *another* gun,—
A shot pouch and a powder horn;
Some augers, saws and other tools,
No chairs, but sev'ral rustic stools,
And all considerably worn;
Such was his furniture, in chief,
And such the inventory, brief.

Two sides were boards and two were stone
Around the miller's dusty room;
It had a smooth but dusty floor,
One window and a batten door,
Behind which stood the miller's broom;
And over the door, in dusky hue,
The legendary, old horse-shoe.

We asked the miller what 'twas for;
He said; "I've often heard them say
It was a way our fathers had
In olden times, to keep the bad
Man and the wicked witch away;"
Then suddenly, a cold, damp chill
Crept o'er us in that damp old mill.

Against partitions, posts and walls
Hung open links and hooks and rings;
And on two ample old-time slates,
Original entries, days, and dates,
All made with pencils, tied to strings;
And safe from mischief, mice and fire,
Hung fly-soiled papers on a wire.

Besides all these were many more
Queer things of, now, forgotten names;
On desk and shelf and window, stored,
Were fig-mill, dice, and checker-board,
Puzzles and other tricks and games,
Of which were played a many a round
The while a grist was being ground.

Upon the tossed and rumpled bed
There lay a violin and bow;
Beside a rustic huntsman's horn
Hung ears of red and yellow corn
With husks as white as virgin snow:
And here and there an empty bag
Hung from the antlers of a stag.

Upon the oaken bench there lay
A dusky well-worn mutton-fleece;
About the hearth lay chunks of wood,
And on the great old stove there stood
An earthern pot of gudgeon-grease
To grease the gudgeons of the mill—
As millers ever have, and will.

And O! the everlasting dust
Kept settling down and down, until
On lamps and stove there was the crust
Of years; and O! the mould and must
Of that old custom, country-mill!
Where idle tools were red with rust
And over all the ceaseless dust.

Gray cobwebs stretched from place to place
Like modern telegraphic wire;
The sun looked shorn of all his rays,
And as, in autumn's smoky days,
Looked like a ball of rayless fire
Through that old, dingy, window-glass,
Where light of sun nor moon could pass.

Some things the miller had and did
Are, now, quite out of use and date;
He lit his pipe with punk and steel,
Kept his accounts with chalk or keel,
Or pencil on a dusty slate;
But just as honestly, I think,
As many kept with pen and ink.

I never knew a miller who
Had not a lot of favorite cats;
And, usually, about a mill
They'd stay, and breed and breed, until,
As numerous as mice and rats;—
Nor Roman ever loved his Rome
More than a cat her native home.

The good old miller loved his cats,
And they loved him, I trow, as well;
And at his call's familiar sound
The feline host came trooping round—
Black, gray, and tortoise-shell;
I see and hear them claw and pur,
I hear the mill's unceasing whir.

I see their several dishes filled
With milk, fresh from the miller's cow!
I hear the miller's coaxing call;
I hear the catkins mew and squall—
Indeed, methinks I hear them now—
And see their long and waving tails
Swinging aloft like threshing-flails.

On that old bench made of a slab,
The aged miller musing sat;
Nor was there aught so thick with dust,
Nor was there aught so thick with crust
As that old miller's quaint old hat;
Nor wind nor hail, nor rain, nor storm
Could penetrate or change its form.

I see him stand—toll-dish in hand—
As plain as though he stood right here ;
And, as he calls, the tempting sound
Gathers the feathered flocks around ;
And now again, I see and hear—
See roosters with their crimson crowns,
Hear cacklings, quacks, and gutteral sounds.

Yes, there he stood and scattered food
Broadcast and free upon the ground ;
He fed his chickens, ducks and geese,
While he stood by and kept the peace
And showed fair play and chance all round ;
Then, as the sun sank in the west,
The feathery flocks retired to rest.

And, now, the evening shades appeared
And, our own shadows growing long,
Admonished us, the day was spent,—
To seek our homes and be content ;
Yet not without a good old song
And tune on that old violin,
Did we our homeward steps begin.

The miller tuned his fiddle up
And rosined well his trusty bow ;
As bow and eye responsive glanced,
Upon the dusty floor we danced
All barefoot rustics, heel—to toe—
Our tracks upon that dusty floor,
Soon to be swept and seen no more.

We asked the miller, then, how long
He had been master-miller there ;
He sighed and said, "well, let me see—
How many years, now, might it be,
Since I've been master-miller here?"
While thus he seemed in reverie,
He sighed again, "why can it be?"

His head hung low in deepest thought,
And wandering seemed his burdened mind;
His heart seemed all too full to speak,
And tears stole down his dusty cheek
And left their crooked tracks behind;
Recovering, then, he answered, "well,
To tell the truth, I cannot tell."

How well do I remember how
We, urchins, were surprised at that;
And how, as if to hide his grief,
His old bandana handkerchief
He took from out his dusty hat,
And, tremblingly, and with the same,
He wiped the tear-drops, as they came.

Let other memories forget,—
This pleasing treasure clings to mine—
He softly touched the mellow strings,
And as he touched, began to sing
And play immortal Auld Lang Syne!
Sweetest of all old Scotia's songs
Which, now, to all the world belongs.

And now, though years have rolled away,
And times and things have sadly changed,
The music of that old-time mill
My willing ear doth ever fill,
Nor can I ever be estranged
From hallowed scenes of olden-times,
Which, here, I sing in rustic rhymes.

I see the old-time overshot,
As on the wheel the water pours;
I see the buckets as they fill
And turn the wheel and it the mill;
Hear how the foaming torrent roars!
The mill-dam and the water-fall—
In dreams I hear and see it all.

There stands the miller, as he did,
In that old upper gable-door ;
There stands the patient country-nag,
While from his back is hoist' the bag,
Up, to the upper garner-door ;
And there, in garners safely poured,
The golden grain, at last, is stored.

Ah ! where is now that dear old mill,
With all its gear and whirring wheels,
And thuddings in the bolting chest?
All, all are silent and at rest ;
But those immortal slippery eels,—
Save one, that took the miller's hook,
Still live and wriggle in the brook.

When last I visited the spot—
That, once, to me, enchanting ground,
A broken mill-burr, iron weight,
And gable-stone, without a date,
Were all that could be seen or found :
All, all the rest, decayed and gone,
Yet, still, the stream flowed on and on.

And there are mills of which we read—
Sad types of human life and fate ;
Their sound of grinding waxes low ;
The grinders cease—are few and slow,
When once our mortal powers abate :
When darkened windows bar the light,
And gathering films obscure the sight.

When Age dreams of a second youth,
Alas ! and dreams of it in vain ;
When with such dreams man is beguiled,
Grows timid as a little child,
And toys and trifles entertain—
When trembling 'neath the weight of years,
And height and depth excite his fears.

And when the almond-tree shall bloom,
And light things prove a grievous weight;
When fond desires no more shall come,
When man shall go to his long home,
And weeping mourners throng the street,
Then shall the dust to dust return,
Safe, gathered in Affection's urn.

So did the Preacher teach; and so
Our greatest poet* fitly saith;
The stream of Time stands never still,
And quickens as it nears the mill—
"The gloomy mills of death;"
And "men may come and men may go,"—
But thou dost ever onward flow.

Then come, O, come, and let us hear
The wise man's sayings in his day;
"Of making books there is no end,"
And studies to exhaustion tend,
And all, and "all is vanity;"
So said the learned Solomon,
But only when *his* book was done.

'Tis like a dream from which I wake
To sad and stern realities;
The miller and the mill, long gone,
Yet, still the brook flows ever on,
'Till lost in deep and mighty seas;
Nor will the stream again return,
Though not a wheel should ever turn.

*Longfellow.

HARVESTING.

"Another field was high with waving grain,
With bended sickles stand the reaper train;
Here, stretched in ranks the levell'd swarths are found,
Sheaves heap'd on sheaves there thicken up the ground.
With sweeping strokes the mowers strew the lands;
At last, the children, in whose arms are borne—
(Too short to gripe them,) the brown sheaves of corn.
The rustic monarch of the field descries,
With silent glee, the heaps around him rise.
A ready banquet on the turf is laid
Beneath an ample oak's expanding shade."

—THE ILIAD.

—Man and the soil serene
Dwell neighbor-like together—and the still
Meadow sleeps peaceful 'round the rural door—
And, all familiar, wreathes and clusters o'er
The lowly casement, the green boughs embrace
As with a loving arm, clasping the gentle place!
O, happy people of the fields, not yet
Wakened to freedom from the gentle will
Of the mild nature, still content to share
With your own fields, earth's elementary law!
Calm harvests to calm hopes the boundary set,
And peaceful as your daily labor, there,
Creep on your careless lives.

—SCHILLER.

HOW jocund was the old-time harvest-field
When the reapers and the cradlers singing came,
And the rural haunts with merry laughter pealed,
Where, now, the scene is sober, dull and tame!

There was the gay, the jovial company,
Whose arduous labors by their mirth made light,
Gathered the harvest in the good old way,
When rural labor was a true delight.

Then were our young folk with their lot content,
Before the craze for city life had come ;
On honest work and simple pleasures bent—
Theirs, though a rustic, was a happier home.

In Youth-land, now, I dream myself again,
In the cool shade of the old chestnut tree;
I hear the rustling of the falling grain,
The song, the whistle, and the repartee.

And there, beside that rude old wooden can,
Once more a boy in youthland I would be ;
Oblivious that ever I have been a man—
O, bright, sweet boyhood at three score and three !

There, from a spirit to that land returned—
E'en to the far off spirit-land, above,
It was that I, a simple rustic learned
My first rude lessons in the arts of love.

What gray-haired sire who still may linger here,
E'er bound a sheaf raked by a lassy fair,
And did not feel the subtle influence, queer—
The pleasing pain of Cupid's arrow, there?

Or, with her seated on the new-bound sheaf,
Inhale the odors of the fragrant field;
While seeking, there, the mystic clover-leaf,
In mutual pledge his first affection yield ?

From hence we watched the cradlers' sturdy stroke,
And heard the chime of many a gleaming blade;
They bent their course toward yonder sturdy oak,
Which spread for them a still more ample shade.

I see the broad and length'ning avenue—
The swaths transformed to rows of lusty sheaves;
The raking, binding, rustic retinue,
And what the raker for the gleaner leaves.

No greedy, grasping, horse-rake then appeared
To mar the beauty of the harvest-scene;
Kind Affluence the heart of Want still cheered,
When Need and Want came asking leave to glean.

No noisy monster's rattling iron wheels,
Armed to the teeth with ruthless reaper-knives,
Flinging the arms of their audacious reels,
Menaced the simple farmers' limbs or lives.

But we must haste with Betty* and the can
After the thirsty harvest-company;
Midway, the cradlers, waiting, whetting, stand,
Rejoiced the can and Bet' and us to see.

*The old-time black whiskey bottle.

How pours the king of day his flood of heat!
In wimpling wavelets trembles, now, the air;
Each toiler wipes the ceaseless flow of sweat,
And brushes back his locks of moist'ned hair.

The cradlers, served, are whetting-up their scythes—
I hear the sonorous metallic ring;
The rakers and the binders, gay and blithe
Are quaffing nectar from a gourd, or tin.

And now, refreshed, they fall in line again,
While many a trembling head awaits its fall;
Yet, is its trembling all in vain, in vain—
Sad emblem of the fate of all, of all!

Now, at the end, around that oak I see
The harvesters, as in the days of yore,
Beneath the widespread, sylvan, canopy
Their crude libations to fair Ceres pour.

'Tis ten o'clock, and here old Tauser comes—
The herald of the wonted out-door piece;
The rustic maid a rustic ballad hums
The while she spreads the luscious, rural feast.

Here come the heroes of the sickle, too,
As from the far-off, storied, eastern climes—
Those lands of harvests great and laborers few—
The hallowed scenes of far more olden times.

Lured by the shade and viands, too, they haste
To join the cradlers' merrier company;
Each finds a reaper's welcome and a place,
And shares the cradlers' rude festivity.

Promiscuous, on the matted grass reclined,
Or, on the new-bound, heavy-headed sheaves,
Each weary harvester a respite finds,
And of the feast an ample share receives.

Good appetite perfects the rudest meal,
Nor can the cook the appetite supply;
A feast for kings in old-time harvest-field,
Was cold sweet milk and fresh-baked cherry-pie.

On every brow are drops of honest sweat,
And cheeks with ruddy, healthy, blushes glow;
Tired are the faithful laborers, and, yet,
Their buoyant hearts nor let, nor languor know.

Scarce is the rustic banquet ended, when
The youngsters, brimming o'er with mirth and pranks,
Check'd by the leader's nod, desist, and then
Reform in order and step into ranks.

Again, the cradlers lay the harvest low
In ample swaths upon the sunny plain;
The reapers, too, refreshed, at leisure go
To reap the ranker and the lodgéd grain.

Meanwhile the maidens who prepared the piece,
And with it hasted to the harvest-field,
Returning lighter, now, their speed increase
To help prepare the richer noonday-meal.

Again old faithful Tauser leads the way,
As down the grassy lane, they, tripping go,
Singing a merry, old-time, harvest lay,
While to the breeze their glossy tresses flow.

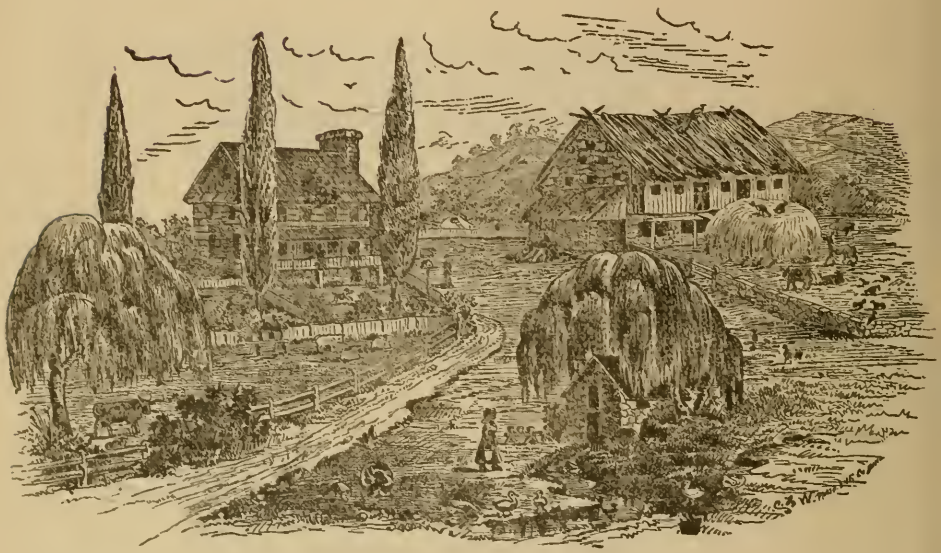
In graceful clouds the curling smoke ascends
From the great chimney of the dear old home;
And with the soft blue sky, it gently blends—
Dissolves from view and is forever gone.

Fast as these fleecy clouds dissolving, go,
Still, others rising, ever and anon—
From which the laborers a'field well know
What on the old-time hearth is going on.

There, blessed Mother, sisters—now no more,—
For house and home and helpless children cared;
Their daily routines plodding o'er and o'er,
For us the savory viands oft' prepared.

Why doth my spirit linger 'round that hearth,
And scenes that sweetened all life's sunny morn?
Why doth my spirit cling to naught on earth
As to the hallowed cot where I was born?

Hark! now, what sounds come on the breezes borne?
So loud and long, and yet so soft and clear;
It is the music of the dinner-horn!
Wild warblings wafted on the summer-air.



Nor lark, nor thrush, nor e'en the nightingale,
Could ever rival those enchanting notes;
Hark, how the swelling solos fill the vale—
How through the hills the dying echoes float!

There is a sympathy, though half forlorn,
E'en in the nature of the brute canine,
For with the music of the dinner-horn
Old Tauser ever blends his plaintive whine.

Say, doth Euterpe dwell within this vale?
Hark! how her answering, echoing, solos rise;
How through the wooded hills and glens and dales
The wild, weird music of the goddess flies!

Nay; on some wooded height, this vale beyond,
She dwells and views the landscape o'er and o'er;
Thence, at the signal of her airy wand
A score of dinner-horns their music pour.

From every neighboring farm the message comes,
To bid the harvesters their labors cease;
And hungry harvesters flock to their homes
There to enjoy the royal noon-day feast.

To such a feast, some feasts are but a name,
Though held within a gilded banquet-hall;
And here, no hand with evil bodings came
To write dark omens on the rugged wall.

O ! Epicurians of long ago—
Ye worshippers of every sensual bliss:
How little, in your wisdom, did ye know
Of such ambrosial banqueting as this !

The banquet o'er, again they seek the shade—
Where e'er arborial, cozy, nooks are found:
There, prone, each weary harvester is laid,
Full length, at ease, upon the grassy mound.

Beneath umbrageous willows, 'round the spring,
Hale swains and buxom lasses slyly meet:
There, with the birds, their harvest-carols sing
In gay abandon, in the cool retreat.

And here, the mellow golden ears they bring,
Inwreathed with roses and with willows, green;
And marching 'round and 'round, they gayly sing
And crown some ruddy lass their "harvest-queen."

Bright is the glorious spring-time
When the summer-birds return—
The arbutus and the eglantine
And the lovely leafing fern;
Sing hey, sing ho—
To the fragrant woods we go:
Sing hey, sing home—
From the fragrant woods we come.

Brighter is the merry May-day,
When the roses are in bloom;
Brighter still the merry hay-day
When the mowers come in June;
Sing hey, sing ho—
To the haying-field we go;
Sing hey, sing home,—
From the haying-field we come.

Still brighter are the harvest-days,
When the reapers, singing, come;
And sweeter are the harvest-lays,
When the harvesting is done;
Sing hey, sing ho,—
To the harvest-fields we go;
Sing hey, sing home—
From the harvest-fields we come.

We hail the hour of labor
When the rosy dawn appears;
We inhale the mellow flavor
Of the mellow golden ears;
Sing hey, sing ho—
In the rosy morn we go;
Sing hey, sing home—
At the winding horn we come.

Fragrant are the wreaths we bring—
Of the yellow, red, and green;
So, marching 'round, we sing,
And crown our harvest-queen;
Sing hey, sing ho,
With the yellow, red, and green—
Sing hey, sing ho,
We crown our harvest-queen.

How sweet the hour of leisure
When we gather 'round the spring,
And, in our rustic measures,
With the birds our carols sing!
Sing hey, sing home—
From the harvest-field we come;
Sing hey, sing ho,—
To the harvest-field we go.

More glorious will our meeting be,
When our harvests here are o'er,
And we have a harvest-jubilee
On the f-a-r-off, brighter shore!
Sing hey, sing ho—
When our harvests here are o'er
We will have a harvest-home
On that far-off, brighter shore!

This is the noon-day rest in harvest-time—
Delightful hour, ever, all too short
For rest and romp and cherry-trees to climb,
Or rustic lasses on the sly to court.

One finds, apart, a cool, retired place,
Whence darkness banishes annoying flies;
There, in the arms of Morpheus, embraced,
In brief, but sweetest slumbers wrapt, he lies.

Still others, 'neath the elm's inviting shades,
Or in the farmer's humble, wooden shed,
Are grinding up their trusty Waldron* blades,
While summer-birds are singing overhead.

And now, the old time-clock upon the stair
Rings out, in silvery tones, the hour of *one;*
For work, the harvesters again prepare,
And there's an end of noon-day rest and fun.

Back to the field they slowly wend their way—
Less blithe and gay than in the dewy morn;
They dread the heat and burden of the day,
But know that heat and burden must be borne.

More leisurely the leader takes his place—
Each follower calmy waits for his advance;
The hindmost, half inclined to give him chase,
Cuts deeper, winks, and slyly looks askance.

So, one by one, till all, again in line,
The arduous labors of the day renew;
They bend their course toward yonder lofty pine—
A long, a weary and a heavy "through."

*The most celebrated of all scythes.

Mark, now, the cadence of the cradlers' swing—
Smooth is the rhythm and measured is the time;
Melodious is the gleaming Waldron's ring,
And sweet the music of the mellow'd chime.

No mid-way halt for Betty and the can—
The game is now to give the leader chase;
And he who beats him is the better man—
By right entitled to the leader's place.

They press him hard; each bent upon the prize,
Faster and faster every cut is made;
Each cradler claims to have the better scythe—
Full famous as the famed Damascus blade,

Bravely the sturdy leader holds his place,
While the rakers and th' binders, far to rear—
All, now, excited by the cradlers' race,
Still urge them forward with inspiring cheers.

By heat and thirst they are, alike, oppressed,
But still no halt for Betty and the can;
Fain would the rakers and the binders rest,
Still, each set cheering for its right-hand man.*

Faster and deeper every cut is made,
Until, at length, the unison is lost;
No more in order, are the swaths, now, laid,
But tedded, tangled topsy-turvy toss'd.

No more the hasty sheaf is smooth and straight;
No more the narrowing swaths are neat and clean;
Nor will the cradlers, yet, their speed abate,
Though more they leave for Need and Want to glean.

*So each cradler was called by his followers.

From raker-girls and binders—not a word—
The jolly binders help the girls along;
Nor jest, nor jilt, nor repartee is heard,
And only from the leisure lark, a song.

And onward, still, the sturdy cradlers go,
All heedless of the reeking, dripping brow;
Each has his eye upon the nearing goal,
Nor "luck in leisure" does he think of now.

How like migrating fowl on tireless wing,
In spring or autumn, toward the distant pole!
Or, like the trained athletes in Hellas' ring,
Lured by the olive-wreath to win the goal.

Still onward, onward, toward the stately tree,
Whose growing shadow falls athwart the plain,
For there the thirsty cradlers hope to see
The youths with Betty and the can, again.

The length'ning shade, as if to meet them, too,
Creeps slowly toward them o'er the sea of ears;
While singing birds and rustics greet, anew—
Those with their warblings, *these* with lusty cheers.

And now, within the pinetree's sombre shade,
Again the reapers and the cradlers meet;
And there, the urchin and the little maid,
Who come with Betty and the can, they greet.

On gather'd sheaves reclining, at their ease,
Fresh water from the crystal spring they quaff:
Fanned by the cool, the grateful western breeze—
Aloud resound the merry jest and laugh.

Now, waggish wit runs wild and jokes are free—
O, feast of rustic wit and "flow of soul!"
Tinged with infusions of the "barley-bree,"
Round goes the rude, but mirth-inspiring bowl.

O, fertile fountain of jollity and jest,
How dost thou sharpen wit and lighten toil!
Strange that our merry cradlers like thee best
With mint, or tansy, or with pennyroyal.

Of themes discussed, the cradlers' race is chief,
And high, and higher rise the mirthful cheers,
Sweet are the rest and rollic, but too brief,
For in the west a threat'ning cloud appears.

The law has not yet measured off the day,
But as of old, 'tis measured by the sun;
The *love* of labor gilds its meager pay,
And rest is solace when the day is done.

In pairs, the rustics slyly steal away
To seek the cozy nests among the sedge;
Or, like the feathered songsters, too, they stay,
To pluck sweet berries from the tangled hedge.

Sweeter than berries are the little rests
Snatched from the labors of the harvest-field;
Nor purer odors, nor a richer zest,
Could rose-crowned, Myrtle-Muse,* her votaries yield.

Again, the music of the whetted scythe
Awakes the echoes in the neighb'ring groves;
And the song of the maidens, sweet and blithe
Is tinged with sadness by the plaintive dove's.

*Erato, the Muse of lyric, especially of amatory poetry.

Along the shade of the adjacent wood,
The rested harvesters resume their way;
And the reapers go, but in reluctant mood,
To quit the cradlers' merrier company.

On whirring wing escapes the startled quail—
Beside a grass-grown stump her nest is found;
But old-time cradlers never, never, fail
To leave an ample covert stand around,

The blushing maidens gather 'round the nest
In wonder, bending o'er the grassy nook;
The beauteous treasures curious thoughts suggest,
The while, with bated breath, they stoop and look.

Meanwhile, the busy cradlers, moving on,
Have left their truant followers behind;
Again the binders help the girls along,
And in the help a noble pleasure find.

Out in the open field and glaring sun
Our languid harvesters are toiling, still;
By dint of doing, they, at length, have won
The blazing brow of yonder treeless hill.

And there, by swelt'ring heat and toil oppress'd,
They halt to hail the hoped for cooling breeze;
But Boreas sleeps within his cave, at rest,
And leaves hang motionless upon the trees.

So close and sultry, the surrounding air—
The dove sits silently with drooping wing;
So dull and lifeless is the atmosphere
That e'en the lively lark has ceased to sing.

This sunny rest is briefest of the brief—
Now for the oak the thirsty cradlers steer,
Where can and Betty, snug, behind the sheaf,
Invite the harvesters to better cheer.

Again forgathered with the reapers, there,
Once more the harvest-goddess they adore;
Doff hats and bonnets to the cooler air,
And sing sweet ballads to the hills' encore.

And from the neighb'ring fields, afar, or near,
Responsive echoes, cheers, and songs are heard;
From distant barns the bantering chanticleer—
From pasture-grounds, the drowsy, lowing herd.

But sudden sadness overclouds the scene
And checks the tide of gayety and mirth—
The leader, fainting—backward on the green—
Lies pale and trembling on the cheerless earth.

As if affliction from the dust came forth,
And trouble sprang, unbidden, from the ground,
So man is, somehow, born, or, doomed to both,
As flying sparks are ever upward bound.

By ardent toil and sweltering heat unmanned,
The leader languishes beside the tree;
But sov'reign Betty's ever nigh at hand,
With bitter herbs steep'd in the barley-bree.

Like good Samaritans all gather 'round—
They bathe his wrists, his hands, his head and face;
A sov'reign balm for every ill is found
In homely remedies with faith and grace.

Meanwhile, the threat'ning cloud is tow'ring high—
A tall, grim, monster full of rain and wrath;
Slowly it spreads o'er all the western sky,
Shrouding the day-king and his gilded path.

High, on the thatch, despite the lightning-gleams,
Appears the peacock's proud and stately form;
He rends the welkin with his piercing screams,
And warns the workers of the coming storm.

The croaking tree-frog, underneath the limb,
Betokens something brewing in the air;
The darting swallows, hither, thither, skim
In search of savory insects sporting there.

The grazing herds first hear the thunder roll
And throng the portals of the well-known gate;
The sheep and lambkins seek their wonted fold
And for the shepherd-boy impatient wait.

A settled calm pervades the peaceful vale
And brings each distant, rural, sound more near;
Portentous preludes to the rising gale,
Which fill the farmer's heart with anxious fear.

Upon the homestead porch, meanwhile, behold,
There sits the pensive, hoary-headed sire,
Watching the clouds like solemn seer of old,
Whose ken was conscious of celestial fire.

And now, grandfather, leaning on his cane,
Comes, weather-wise, as Age hath ever been;
He calls attention to the weather-vane
And tells the toilers what the omens mean.

Weak, from his weary walk, he, trembling, bows
And rests his arms upon the rugged rail;—
Predicts the counter-movement of the clouds
And deep-toned roaring sound "are signs of hail."

Obedient to his kindly warning word
The young folk quickly go to gath'ring sheaves;
And now, already, in the grove is heard
The breezy rustling of the languid leaves.

Admonished by his sober, sage advice,
The adult company to shocking goes;
And, as by magic, hooded heaps arise
O'er all the field, in long and length'ning rows.

From hence he turns and opens wide the gate—
The hurrying hornéd herds, now, throng the lane;
He and the milk-maid, sober and sedate,
Are hast'ning after to escape the rain.

The cloud, still rising, as the day declines—
The cooling zephyrs fan the heated air;
Behind the frowning cloud the sun still shines,
And, still, the silver-lining lingers there.

To winds, the gentle breezes, swelling, rise—
The weather-vane, now, hither-thither veers;
The sombre cloud-wings spread the vaulted skies
And all their silver lining disappears.

Still gath'ring, shocking, are the harvesters—
Nor song, nor cheer, nor repartee is heard;
Now, silent e'en the feather'd choristers—
In cozy covert sits the songless bird.

In flash on flash the forkéd lightning gleams;
In echoing peals the deep-toned thunder rolls;
Still, Jove, on high, restrains the watery streams,
And, kindly he, the gath' ring storm controls.

Faster, and faster still, the shocks arise—
Nor till the last, the willing workers yield;
Anon, on fence hang sickle, rake, and scythe,
And hurrying harvesters fast fly the field.

O'er fences, fields, and fallow-grounds they fly—
Again the binders help the girls along;
And, now, the storm is raging wild and high—
No time for romps, for repartee nor song.

The laid-out leader lingers far behind—
Lured by the shelter of the old oak tree;
And there, to risk it, he is half inclined—
Alone, with Betty and the barley-bree.

"There's luck in liquor, sings the jolly tar;
There's luck in leisure, say the wondrous wise,
And I will trust to my own lucky star,"
So doth the leader, there, soliloquize.

The lurid lightnings flash from pole to pole;
The raging storm-king sweeps athwart the plain:
And, now, o'er head the muttering thunders roll—
A moment's calm—anon, great drops of rain.

On spacious homestead-porch, in groups or squads,
Or in the spacious old-time kitchen, there—
That temple of the rural household-gods—
Our merry harvesters forgathered are.

The place commands a view far down the vale—
Of forests, fens, and fields of bending corn;
From thence their eyes on hill and dale regale,
And watch the wonders of the thunder-storm.

The four o'clock-piece—hastily prepared—
To take a'field, here, ready, waiting stands;
But for the storm, it had, a'field been shared
And there regaled the hungry harvest-hands.

But hark! old Tauser barks; and down the lane,
He sees the "luck in leisure" leader come—
At his own gait, all dripping wet with rain,
And kindly Tauser barks him welcome home.

His faith in lucky stars forsook him, when
A thunderbolt struck in a neighb'ring tree;
He took "Black Betty" 'neath his arm and then
He hasten'd homeward with the barley-bree.

He heard the thunders bellow'ng loud and deep—
He marked the sharp, reverberating peals;
But, still determined his own gait to keep,
Though thunderbolts should strike him in the heels.

"*All* home!" bless'd mother and the girls rejoice—
Mother! Angel of love and tender care;
Methinks I hear, again, her soft, sweet, voice,
As in my blessed boyhood I did, there.

Her anxious heart with goodness overflows—
On good deeds bent, whatever may betide;
Now, as the busy day draws near its close,
She and the girls the evening meal provide

Gay are the gallants gather'd on the porch—
Each buxom lassie has her rustic beau;
And, like an apparition, now, comes forth,
Ubiquitous, immortal, "Fiddling Joe!"

His strings are damp, and damper is his bow:
So, in the blazing hearth he takes his place:
Soon rye and rosin make the fiddle go,
While flick'ring faggots light his dusky face.

The romping rustics form a social ring,
And mirth and music soon are running high:
Joe sways and plays the while the rustics sing
The lively lyric, "Coming through the rye."

It rains, it rains—and now, a frightful flash!
A thunder-bolt that shakes the solid earth!
A startling trembling of the window-sash—
A sudden silencing of song and mirth.

The frighten'd dogs within their kennels hide;
The boldest faces, now, for once turn pale;
Parents the rashness of the children chide—
Anon, the rattling of the hornéd hail!

An early darkness, like a curtain falls—
The old-time taper flickers faintly, there;
Dim shadows quiver on the rude old walls
And frighten'd children huddle on the stair.

Old Fiddling Joe now makes a quick retreat
Across the burnished, oaken, kitchen-floor;
Gladly abandons his accustom'd seat,
And finds a safer one behind the door.

The hardy harvesters desert the porch
And crowd the kitchen and the spacious hall;
And e'en the dogs their kennel-barriers force
And under beds, they, trembling, whining, crawl.

And, from the hearth the women, now, retire—
Far from the chimney as they can, they sit;
Nor handle metal, nor approach the fire—
They neither cut nor crimp, nor sew nor knit.

Louder, and louder still, the thunders roar—
Peal on peal the watery welkin fills;
In torrents, now, the floods descend and pour
From trailing clouds that seem to touch the hills.

Thicker and faster falls the icy hail,
As, thunder-shaken from the realms above;
The stately poplars bend before the gale,
And forests bow before the wrathful Jove,

Chill is the air—an almost wintery chill—
And mother—tender-hearted mother weeps;
I hear again, "Lord! if it be thy will!"
While in her arms her tender infant sleeps.

While rain and hail the roof relentless beat,
On mother's knee her boy lies snug and warm;
While, overhead the rugged rafters creak,
'Tis Heaven's will that they withstand the storm.

Ah! yes, 'tis *Friday;* "all-unlucky day
To set in harvest;" so grandfather said;
"But younger folk have this time had their way"—
Despite the counsels of the older head.

With trembling hands he takes the Word of God,
In brazen clasps and rustic leather bound:
At his suggestive, patriarchal nod
The chasten'd laborers are seated round.

In unfeign'd reverence every head is bowed,
All eyes are closed or resting on the floor,
The while, with trembling voice he reads aloud
How Job, in patience, his afflictions bore.

How David, when in sorest troubles cried
From out the depths, still trusting in the Lord;
How from the depths profound he sang and sighed
And tuned his sacred harp in sweet accord.

In humble, homespun garb the grandsire kneels
Beside his old-time rugged, oaken chair;
And o'er the group a solemn silence steals
While he leads all in fervent, faithful prayer.

"Our Father! Thou, which rulest over all—
"Though guilty sinners, as thou knowest, we be;
"On thee, in this, thy seeming wrath, we call—
"O! answer, when in faith we call on thee!

"Thine is the world and thy decrees its laws;
"How wondrous all thy works! in wisdom made;
"To thee we now commit our humble cause—
"On thy sure promise all our hopes are stayed.

"Thou doest great and wondrous things on earth;
"Thou sendest rain upon the thirsty fields;
"Changest to friutfulness the barren dearth,
"So that the harvest in abundance yields.

"Thou dost chastise and wisely take away—
"Shall man not suffer evil at thy hands?
"What doest thou? shall no man dare to say—
"As thou commandest, so the matter stands.

"Thou, at thy will, the waters canst withhold—
"At thy command they dry and disappear:
"As thou didst try thy faithful saints of old,
"So dost thou try the humblest sinner here.

"Thou bindest up the waters in the clouds,
"Yet, is the watery cloud not rent in twain:
"Thou speakest there in thunders long and loud—
"In sparkling drops descends the precious rain.

"For *thee* the lightnings flash from pole to pole—
"The rain and hail assault our humble roof;
"In thy dread voice the fearful thunders roll,
"And Heaven's pillars shake at thy reproof.

"Thou art the God of heaven and earth and seas—
"Almighty Maker, Ruler over all;
"The heavenly showers follow thy decrees—
"On just and unjust, both alike, they fall.

"Upon the lonely, silent, wilderness—
"On places all-untrod' by foot of man
"Thou sendest rain, the roaming beasts to bless
"And stay the herbage of the thirsty land.

"In dens the lions couch and lie in wait;
"In coverts, there, their hungry whelps abide:
"All look to thee, in season, for their meat,
"And for the ravens thou dost food provide.

"Thou hast shut up the sea with bars and doors;
"The clouds its swaddling garments, thou hast made;
"Thou sayest—when e'er the mighty monster roars—
"Hereto, but here shall thy proud waves be stayed.

"There is a path which no fowl ever knew—
"Voracious vulture's eye hath never seen;
"To which the lion's whelps have found no clew,
"Nor furious lion through its mazes been.

"So, Lord, by searching, none can find thee out;
"But yet, again, in humble faith we pray—
"Remove far from us every sinful doubt
"That thou the bottles of the clouds wilt stay.

"Avert thy judgments from our guilty heads;
"Grant us the cover of that righteous robe—
"And if, O, Lord, it be in tattered shreds—
"That clothed thine ancient, faithful servant, Job.

"For sake of HIM who suffered all for us,
"In humble faith we pray to thee, again;
"Grant us the cover of HIS righteousness—
"All praise and glory to thy name, *Amen.*

All through the reading of the sacred word
And long-drawn uttering of the solemn prayer,
Save rain and storm, no other sound was heard,
But Tauser's whining 'neath the kitchen-stair.

Yes, a keen sense of the ridiculous
Had moved the laughter of a harmless child—
His mother's last-born, petted boy it was,
At Tauser's whimpering, rather loudly smiled

All faults were punished, prompt, as they arose,
However trivial the fault might be;
Just as the arbitrary father chose,
The child was chided and the dog went free.

The prayer ended—all in sadness rise;
The serious sire ventures to the door,
And, gazing on the still, o'erclouded skies,
Predicts "the heaviest of the storm is o'er."

Far down the eastern skies the lightning gleams;
Fainter and fainter, there, the thunders roar;
While down the neighboring hills the murky streams
In rushing torrents, all resistless, pour.

Along the fences lie the drifted hail;
In sadness bows the smitten garden-rose;
While many a troubled face looks wan and pale,
And none more grave than poor old Fiddling Joe's.

The storm has sunken to a gentle breeze;
The cooks, meanwhile, resume their kitchen-cares;
The youngsters, racing for the early trees,
Scramble for the apples and the harvest-pears.

"A clear sky in the West!" one shouts aloud;
The golden sunbeams meet the drops of rain!
The radiant rainbow-pledge stands in the cloud,
That floods shall ne'er destroy the earth again.

Bright bow of promise! token, ever dear!
Sweet is the lesson which from thee we learn;
While thou dost in the watery cloud appear,
Seedtime and harvest shall to us return.

Above, behold the blue, ethereal sky—
Pure as if laved in some celestial bath;
The sun, descending from his throne on high,
Outshines the splendors of his upward path.

He casts the evening-shades across the plain,
And Nature's music wakes the peaceful vale:
The sweeter for the storm, the hail, and rain,
Are song of thrush and merry, piping quail.

The twittering swallows circling 'round and 'round,
Drop, one by one, within the chimney-flue,
Where, in the dismal, dusky, depths profound,
They find a refuge—to their instincts true.

The plaintive robin on the cherry-tree,
Sits all at ease upon the topmost limb;
He hails the sunlight in his tranquil glee,
And joins the cat-bird in his evening-hymn.

Meanwhile, the cooks complete the final meal,—
Now, by the thunder-storm delayed so long:
And, like the feathered folk of wood and field,
They sweeten all their daily toil with song.

As the apple among the forest trees
So is my love among the sons;
O! wake him not until he please—
I charge you, O! ye simple ones:

For, the rain is over and gone—
For the rain is over and gone ;
The flowers appear on every hand;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

The supper o'er, and with the setting sun,
The reapers and the cradlers, singing, go:
The rakers and the binders lingering on,
Dance to the music of old Fiddling Joe.

How jocund was the happy harvest-time,
When the reapers and the cradlers, singing, came,
And the rural haunts with merry music chimed,
Where, now, the scene is sober, dull, and tame!

SEEDING, AND THE PLOW-BOY'S SONG.

Hail ancient manners! sure defence,
Where they survive, of wholesome laws;
Remnants of love, whose modest sense
Thus into narrow room withdraws;
Hail usages of pristine mould,
And ye that guard them, mountains old!
—WORDSWORTH.

I almost grudge the country-boy
Who trudges a'field behind the plow;
How faithfully he turned the soil!
How patiently he bore the toil—
Yea, far more patiently than now,
When tricks of trade and sinecure
From farm and field and toil allure.

I see grandfather as he sat
Beneath the grand, old, spreading oak;
Quite old and feeble, worn and lame,
And looking back, the way he came—
And viewing, thence, the curling smoke
Above the homestead-chimney rise
And float toward the evening-skies.

There, in the shade alone, I see,
As once I saw the aged man;
Along the narrow, winding lane,
He came upon his trusty cane
With water in the wooden can,
Fresh, from the willow-shaded spring,
And musing, there, I hear him sing.

And there, while resting in the shade,
The plodding plow-boy's song was sung;
And many a story there he told
About the merry times of old—
In days when *he* was hale and young—
Of men and things in days gone by—
Each legend ending with a sigh.

And when the trees had ceased to throw
Their slender shadows o'er the plain,
The boys unhitched and left their plows;
The girls trudged with the lowing cows,
A'singing down the grassy lane;
And as they sang and trudged along,
The merry lark joined in the song.

I see him perched, tip-top, upon
That grand old chestnut-tree;
And as the breezes come and go,
I see him swaying to and fro
As merry as a lark can be;
But in the hedge, or haw-thorn bush,
Below, he hears the mocking thrush.

Seed-time and harvest, then as now,
Came with the softly rolling years;
The farmer made his patient rounds
To plow and plant or sow his grounds
And waited for the golden ears;
Nor did he wait or ask in vain,
The early and the latter rain.

Broadcast, he, trusting, sowed his seed
From the old homespun, hempen sack,
With wheat or barley, oats, or rye,
By some old-fashioned knot or tie,
Swung o'er his worn and weary back;
A willing, patient, son of toil,
He trod and sowed the sullen soil.

The wildest of Utopian dreams
Of human art and human skill—
Nor plodding Faith had yet believed,
Nor shrewd Invention yet conceived
The wondrous agricultural drill,
With which the farmer, now-a-days,
Sows, plants, and smiles at old-time ways.

And this is the song the plow-boys sung
Making their weary rounds,
While echoing glen and forest rung,
Merry with rural sounds:

Slowly, but surely, we turn the soil,
Trudging the livelong day;
Patiently bearing the wearisome moil,
Working the good old way—
Working the good old way;
Patiently bearing the wearisome moil,
Working the good old way.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard, go—
Consider her ways and be wise;
The tiny seeds in faith we sow,
Never do thou despise—
Never do thou despise
The tiny seeds in faith we sow,
Never do thou despise.

And he who is of the cold afraid,
Never a harvest-crop shall reap,
Nor th' sluggard who turns upon his bed,
Given to slumber and sleep—
Given to slumber and sleep;
Nor th' sluggard who turns upon his bed,
Given to slumber and sleep.

Never a stalk of corn yet eared
Without the farmer's patient toil;
And every living grain is reared
From a dead one in the soil—
From a dead one in the soil;
And every living grain is reared
From a dead one in the soil.

As the gospel-sower sowed his field,
In holy faith, in days of old,
So we, and pray for a mighty yield—
A yield of a hundred fold—
A yield of a hundred fold;
So we, and pray for a mighty yield—
A yield of a hundred fold.

At length the red autumnal sun
Has sunk behind the dark blue hills;
Yet, grand and gorgeous is the sight—
The glare of his expiring light
The evening sky with glory fills;
And, as by magic, in the skies,
Illumined towers and domes arise.

'Tis evening, and soft twilight, gray,
Hangs o'er the peaceful, drowsy, vale;
The merry lark and mocking-bird,
And saucy wren nomore are heard,
And silent is the covied quail;
But from the thicket on the hill—
The shrill notes of the whippoorwill.

The feathered tribes have gone to roost
And burdened beasts are stalled and fed;
And now, the rustic lamp is lit,
And 'round the frugal board all sit,
With father, always, at the head;
In sober, silent reverence, now,
While grace is said, their heads they bow.

Slowly the frugal meal was done—
('Twas *never* done in undue haste;)
They took their time to work and eat—
To masticate their bread and meat,
Nor was there ever useless waste,
For, appetite and relish keen,
Left dish and cup and platter clean.

No startling, shrill, steam-whistle's blast
Cut short the simple, rustic feast;
Tired Industry could yet afford
To linger at the ample board,
And leisurely and well digest:
All unconcerned for style or wealth,
Rich in contentment, peace, and health.

THE COON-HUNT.

Why loves the soul on earlier years to dwell,
When Memory spreads around her saddening spell:
When discontent, with sullen gloom o'ercast,
Turns from the present and prefers the past?
—SOUTHEY.

NOW, mark that group of restless youth,
In consultation, list and shy,
And those impatient, sharp canines—
Old Tauser knows just what it means,
And all the rest, how lithe and sly!
All eager, by the pale half moon,
To hunt the 'possum or the coon.

Slowly they go—the stealthy boys—
O'er fences, fallows, fields and bogs;
Again I hear the shout and song—
The shout that helps the chase along,
And chorus of the yelping dogs,
Already on the scent of blood,
Far out of sight, far in the wood.

The hunters halt to fix the sound—
They stand in breathless silence, mute:
And, now, they start upon the race,
Hope animates each ruddy face,
And quickens, now, the wild pursuit
O'er rocks and hills, and stumps and stones,
Heedless alike of flesh and bones.

They have the course, they're certain, sure—
    There surely can be no mistake;
They have "'im up," in Miller's swamp,
Look out boys, for a merry romp,
    And for a tussel and a shake,
When Tauser leads the fierce attack
With Rover, Tray, and snarling Jack.

But, now, the dogs have ceased to bark,
    And all again is dull and still.
Again the hunters bate their breath,
And silence reigns as deep as death.—
    But, hark! on yonder wooded hill
They're running on a fresher trail —
They'll never follow one that's stale.

"They'll tree'im too—mind if they don't,
    They're close and hot upon the scent."
(They're like the poet making rhymes
About the merry olden times,
    Who follows his bucolic bent,
Convinced that, somehow, he was born
To—"make a spoon, or spoil a horn.")

Straight for the hill, they turn their steps—
    The ardent chase brooks no delay;
With steaming breaths and heated blood,
Through brake and marsh and minie flood,
    Sure of their sneaking, skulking prey—
But, Miller's interloping "Tromp"
Has fooled the dogs back to the swamp.

Back to the swamp the hunters go,
    Each with a sturdy hickory withe;
A'down the hill and o'er the bog,
Full bent upon the "dirty dog,"
    But find it all a tricky myth!
The silent swamp, the truth reveals—
The dogs are running in the fields.

Chagrined, perplexed and sorely vexed,
Our weary hunters now sit down
On stumps or stones or dingy logs,
And listen to the treacherous dogs,
Still on their weary fruitless round—
To short, sharp yelps, and longdrawn howls,
To whippoorwills and hooting owls.

There, munching apples, they consult—
"Was it a 'possum, fox, or coon?"
And, there, while crushing chestnut-burrs,
They wonder why the treach'rous curs
Have, this time, quit the hill so soon;
Until, at length, they all conclude
The long pursuit must be renewed.

So, once more, they resume the march,
Down through the nearest fallow-field—
Heedless alike of brush and thorn,
They mount a hill and wind a horn,
But, sanguine Tauser will not yield;
Hark! how his howl the welkin fills,
Still onward toward the distant hills.

Another consultation, now;
And that is, what shall next be done?
"The crazy curs have raised a fox,
And he is making for the rocks,
And there will surely end the fun"
But thirst for vengeance on the brute
Resolves the hunters on pursuit.

Onward the jolly hunters go—
And, like old Tauser, Nimrod leads;
Through brakes and brambles, brush and vines
Wherever he an opening finds,
And through the rank and tow'ring weeds,
O'er field and fence and bog and ditch,
Fearless of bogle, elf, and witch.

Through Spanish needles, briars, burrs,
Through tall and rank, luxuriant grass
They struggle and they push along
Regardless of the cricket's song—
Suspended, as the hunters pass;
And over-head the waning moon—
But where are dogs and fox and coon?

Still onward patiently, they go,
Till strength and hope have, well-nigh, sunk;
At length around an old hay-stack
They find the snarling, yelping, pack;
Says Nim.: "by Jove, they've got a skunk!"
A'armed, the hunters run, pelmel,
Resolved to escape the infernal smell.

But, Tauser and his aids stand fast
And, brave as soldiers face the foe;
Anon, attack, anon, retreat,
Anon, the gallant charge repeat,
Still surging to and fro they go;
Behold, beneath a straggling vine
Ensconced, a harmless porcupine!

The thorny beast, though round and small—
Recumbent on the rugged ground,—
Instinctively he plies his arts,
(Conceals his unprotected parts)
Presents his sharp defiant darts
And bravely conquors all around;
And, thus, at every point well armed,
The harmless beast is left unharmed.

"What next!" says Nim; "where shall we go
To seek and find adventures new?"
"To hunt the coon!" the rest reply—
"We must get up a coon!" they cry,
"And that's what we are *bound* to do;
Here, Tauser, Rover, Tray, and Jack,
Hunt up the trail and take the track!"

Old Tauser, at the word, leads off—
To windward sets his trusty nose:
Swift, followed by the other three,
As eager and as fleet as he,
And followed, o'er the fence he goes
With undiminished speed and grace
The tireless dogs renew the chase.

Through brush and brambles, o'er the fields—
They soon are gone and out of sight;
They've passed beyond the rugged crest,
The moon is passing to the west,
And stars are few but shining bright;
Silent and calm, all nature, all,
All, save the distant water-fall.

'Tis at the old, old, custom-mill—
The old mill in the quiet vale;
'Tis o'er its dam the water pours,
Profoundly deep, it foams and roars
And echoes far o'er hill and dale;
And as the echos sweep the plain,
Gives token of the coming rain.

The hunters stand upon the hill—
Eager to catch the distant sound
Of Tauser's voice—far down the glen,
Perchance at the old fox's den,
Where rocks and gloomy caves abound:
They listen long, but all is still,
All, save the water at the mill.

And, now, they mount a fence and rest—
Consulting what they next shall do;
Brave Nimrod, now, in judgment sits—
The situation tries his wits—
He halts and doubts which way to go;
"Lis'en," says one, "I hear a sound—
Is't bull-dog, mastiff, cur, or hound?"

One says the dogs are far away—
Another says they're coming near;
And, now, springs up the rude debate—
Each speaker does the dogs locate
According to his several ear;
"Be still," says Nimrod, "still, and hark!
It's Tauser's—for I know his bark."

But, now, the night is wearing late—
The friendly moon is getting low;
Methinks I see the morning-star,
And from yon' straw-thatched barn, afar,
I hear the waking roosters crow;
As for the dogs, they've made the goal—
They're running in the Devil's Hole.*

"Behold a light in yonder bog!
And nearer, and more near
It comes, it comes; it's Lantern Jack!
I feel a creeping up my back!
But, never will I flinch nor fear,"
Says Nim', but O, the fun—
Bold Nimrod is the first to run!

And run he does, and all the rest,
Since fearless Nimrod takes the lead;
Nor do they even once look back,
To see what comes of "Lantern Jack,"
So rapid is the hunters' speed,
Through woods, alive with screeching owls,
And weird elves and hungry ghouls.

And, now, they're nearing Hessian Hollow,
Where wicked Hessians buried lie—
Or empty graves where once they lay,
For some, the doctors stole away,—
And where a wild and lonely cry
Is heard at night, where once they lay,
But th' doctors long since stole away.

*A bog, surrounded by rocks and hills, and inaccessible to man.

The hunters hear that lonely cry
And see the ghostly gallows-post,
Where seven thieving Hessians hung;
The cross-beam, too, from which they swung,
And—heavens! the Hessian ghost!!
See, how the truant hunters fly
From ghost, dogs, coon, and fox, and cry,

"The devil take the fox, the dogs,
The 'possum and the same old coon!"
Still haunted by that lonely cry,
Still from the ghost the hunters fly,
And soon, yes, very, *very* soon,
They're safe at home, snug in their beds—
All hairs erect upon their heads.

O, Morpheus, thou god of sleep
And dreams! extend thy gracious arms,
And in those downy arms embrace
These hunters, weary of the chase
And of those horrible alarms;
There, let them sleep and dream, but rest
As on a tender mother's breast.

O, Sleep, thou Heaven-appointed source
Of brief, but soft and sweet repose!
Now, in thine arms, the hunters lie—
Nomore they hear that lonely cry,
Nor see those grim and ghostly foes,
Unless in feint and fleeting gleams,
As Youth oft' sees them in its dreams.

Our youthful dreams, though sweet, are brief,
And, all too gay and bright to last;
Scarce on the picture, have we gazed,
When, as aroused from sleep—amazed,
How swift the rolling years have passed!
And in their all unresting flight,
All seem like watches in the night.

Such is the sleep our hunters have,
When from the old-time homestead-hall—
From just below the quaint old stairs,
Each scarce half-rested hunter hears
The sharp, and shrill paternal call;
I see them turn, and yawn, and rise,
Rubbing their dull and dreamy eyes.

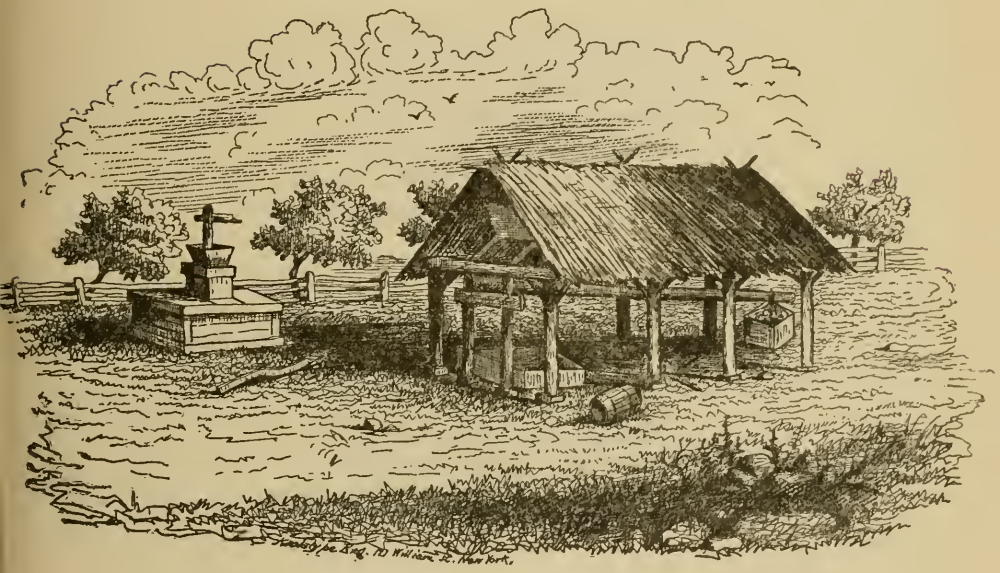
They rise and dress 'mid doubts and fears,
Lest they, perchance, must give account
For drowsiness and absent curs,
For Spanish needles, thorns and burrs,
And lest the guilty blood should mount,
And from the blushing, changing, cheek
The *self*-convicting verdict speak.

As luck would have it, dogs were home,
Snug nestled in the barn-yard-straw,
And looking quite as bright and glad,
Except that poor old Tauser had
A locust-brier in his paw;
Which Nimrod stealthily removed,
Whilst Tauser, plainly, felt reproved.

'Tis well for boys that dogs can't speak—
And quite as well for many men;
For in the silence of the brute,
A thousand hideous crimes lie mute,
And neither tongue nor busy pen
Shall ever to the world declare
The secrets that lie buried there.

CIDER-MAKING AND BUTTER-BOILING.

THERE stood the rude old cider-press
With mammoth screw and pond'rous beam,
Whose mighty weight upon the cheese
Forced from the pomace, thronged with bees,
The nut-brown, luscious, foaming stream;
There stood the rude old apple-mill—
In ruins now, though charming still.



Huge heaps of apples on the green,
Or on the country-wagon, there;
Their mellow hues, their crimson cheeks
How delicate their tints and streaks—
Their grateful fragrance filled the air
With spicy odors, and the breeze
Came laden with them, from the trees.

Who loved not cider-making-day,
In days when we were very young—
To linger 'round the press and mill
And help the bulky barrels fill,
Or on the springy wagon tongue,
With rustic girl, that tongue astride,
Enjoy the mimic tomboy-ride?

A respite from severer toils—
To children, always sweet and new;
To older folks, it was a day
Of—neither work, nor yet of play—
A something rather 'twixt the two;
And, e'en the horses, seemed to know
That lazily, they, too, might go.

The merrier sounds from harvest-fields
Were heard around and hailed nomore;
The plaintive notes of going birds,
The lowing of the distant herds,
And of the loud, prophetic roar
Of mill-dam, or of water-fall,
E'en, now, the peaceful scene recall.

All nature seemed in sympathy—
The birds, the flowers, the fields, the trees;
The sun, the air, the drowsy rills,
The quiet vale, the hazy hills;
The low hum of the honey-bees—
Like melodies, subdued and deep,
When mothers lull their babes to sleep.

And now, the butter-boiling came—
That set the rural hearts ablaze—
That came as sure as autumn came;
Would that it, yet, came, all the same
As in those dreamy autumn days—
With fiddle, frolic, dance and play,
With rustic song and rural lay.

No formal invitations sent—
No formal, fancy tickets then;
From all parts of the neighborhood,
Across the fields and through the wood,
The merry guests came flocking in;
Among the rest, with ready bow,
Ubiquitous, old Fiddling Joe.

I hear him tone and rosin up,
I see his rolling, laughing eye;
Although I have not heard him say—
I know just what he's going to play—
I know it's "Coming Through The Rye;"
Hark! how he wakes the slumb'ring strings,
Hark! how the merry chorus rings.

What rapt'rous music does he make!
To rustic ears it is sublime;
And as he sits and sings and plays,
See, how his body swings and sways,
And how his restless foot keeps time!
'Tis plain that every fiddler feels
The soul of music in his heels.

At times, his faint and sinking notes
In soft cadences seem to die—
Again, inspire the swelling strain,
While all join in the wild refrain
Of,— "Coming Through The Rye!"
Each wild refrain still rising higher,
As does the blazing kitchen-fire.

And so, the while the work goes on,
Joe sings and plays another tune;
"John Anderson," or, "Auld Lang Syne,"
Perhaps, "The Girl I left behind"—
Or, "Banks and Braes O' Bonny Doon;"
Whate'er it is, all join and sing
'Till midnight hours with echoes ring.

Across a rugged bench, astride,
A busy, artless, rustic sits
And pares the apples for the rest,
Who, 'mid the music, song and jest,
Now cut the apples into snits;
While, two by two, well paired, by turns,
Stir, lest the boiling butter burns.

Good butter must be slowly boiled—
According to the old-time way;
And so they boiled and stirred it slow,
Until the cocks began to crow,
And then began the sport and play,
And dance went on, and seldom ceased,
'Till rosy morn adorned the East.

Before they took the kettle off
They stirred the fragrant spices in;
And then, with ladle, tin, or gourd,
The boiling mass was dipped and poured;
Amid the noisy clang and din,
From copper kettle, burning hot,
Into the well-cooled, earthen pot.

'Twas not unusual, at such times,
Three shining copper coins to find
Upon the kettle's bottom, there—
Which lucky coppers—always were,
By goodly custom, out of mind,
Claimed by and given to "Fiddling Joe,"
To buy him rosin for his bow.

At length, when all the work was done
And all the old-time programme played,
The rustics paired, like birds in spring,
And, blithe as they, when on the wing—
Each gallant lover and his maid,
Now, gently, as two cooing doves
Went homeward, whispering mutual loves.

And, as the moon sank in the west
And lingering stars were on the wane—
Perchance, a foot-log to be crossed,
Perchance, 'twas white with early frost—
If so, the gallant rustic swain,
Astride his back his sweetheart took
And carried her safe o'er the brook.

There was a legend in those days—
(I know not was the legend true,)
That "three times carried o'er the brook
Was good as married o'er the book—"
For aught I know 'twas better, too;
For, as the brook flowed on forever,
No power but death the tie could sever.

And, thus, was many a union formed,
Yet, destined ever to endure;
By depths beneath and heights above,
They pledged and vowed eternal love,
If not Platonic, yet as pure
As e'er on Cupid's altars burned,
Or for his soft embraces yearned.

O! what a race of young men then,
Compared with modern dudish beaus;
O! what a race of buxom girls,
With flowing hair and native curls,
And fleet and fair as hinds and roes—
Elastic steps and sportive freaks,
Nor paint nor powder on their cheeks.

They worked, they played, they danced and sang,
They breathed for very *sake* of breath;
They did not lace and brace and pant
And look like some half-wilted plant,
In daily conflict with grim death;
They loved and lived a real life;
Thus trained, became the model wife.

Their healthy blushes, all their own—
Complexion, eyes, and teeth and hair;
All unpolluted with cologne—
Cosmetics were to them unknown,—
All, save the fragrance of the air;
They lived according to a clause
Called *common sense*, in Nature's laws.

But, some will say, "they were not smart—"
No, *fortunately*, they were not;
There *is* a race of girls called "smart,"
With neither health, nor brains, nor heart;
And wo betide the unhappy lot
Of any man, beneath the ban
Of such a useless, "smart" wo-*man*.

BREAKING THE COLT.

WHAT, if there was a colt to break,
As, once a year, at least, there was;
A country-lass would mount astride
The bare-backed filly, and would ride
Amid the storm of wild applause
Of old and young, of girls and boys—
Of rude discords of rural noise:

For, when the boys began to cheer,
The dogs began to howl and bark;
The ducks and geese, about the streams,
Startled the peacock's louder screams—
And, then the soaring, singing lark,
The crowing cocks, the cackling hens,
The mocking thrush, the twittering wrens.

With ease and grace the virgin sat
Upon the pretty, playful colt;
Both in their tender, shoeless feet—
She, on her native cushioned seat,
All heedless of the healthful jolt;
Like bird to waving bough, she clung,
The while some rustic song she sung.

Behold the rude equestrian scene—
The untrained, awkward restive steed,
Behold him loping 'round and 'round
O'er verdant lawn and meadow-ground,
Impatient, restive, to be freed
And left to range and course at will
O'er grassy mead and brook and rill.

I see the fearless rustic sit
Erect as any schooner's mast;
And aye! how steady, proud, and bold
And firmly she maintains her hold
To mane and rein still clinging fast;
Behold them o'er the meadow sail
With waving mane and flowing tail.

Yea, like some craftling off at sea,
By mariner is boldly steered—
But see! they halt before the ditch—
But bravely she applies the switch—
One leap—and, now the ditch is cleared!
Then on, and on, with word and will
She pats and cheers him up the hill.

His foretop, streaming in the breeze,
Unveils his pretty, snow-white star;
He's on the homestretch, and he knows
There's oats awaiting—how he goes!
Straight for the open barnyard-bar,
Or where the gate stands open, wide,—
Where ends the tomboy's rustic ride.

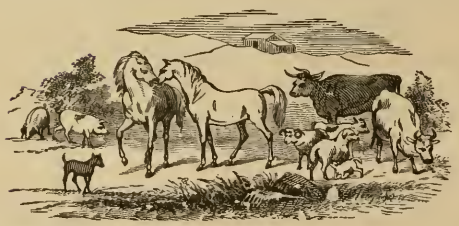
There stands the hale, domestic group,
To greet the heroine's return;
While every tongue approval speaks,
The rude equestrienne's cheeks
With ruddy, healthful, blushes burn;
And, now, at one elastic bound
She leaps, unaided, to the ground.

The youthful steed impatient waits,
The while he chafes and paws and neighs,
He pants and sways, he foams and sweats,
Instinctively he knows he gets
His share of well deservéd praise;
With glowing nostrils, now, he stands
And bows to gentle words and hands.

Frail, "pretty" girl, let me suggest
What might be for your solid good;
Away with stiffness, stilt and pride,
Unlace, unbend, and mount and ride
And circulate your stagnant blood:
In loose and flowing garments dressed,
Inflate your lungs, expand your chest.

But while I would, if I but could,
Some old-time better ways restore,—
It would not follow you must ride
Without a saddle, and astride,
Like rustic girls, in days of yore;
But rather than not ride at all,
Ride on the hand-rail in the hall.

Be not ashamed of rural sports,
Though they be somewhat rude and free;
They're full of pleasure, joy, and health—
Worth more than heaps of golden wealth,
Or shining pearls from any sea;
Within your reach the treasure lies,
Put forth your hand, secure the prize.



THE HUSKING.

"Swung o'er the heaped-up harvest, from
pitchforks in the mow,
Shine dimly down the lanterns on the
pleasant scene below;
The growing pile of husks behind, the
golden ears before,
And laughing eyes and busy hands and
brown cheeks glimmering o'er."
—WHITTIER.

WHEN Autumn in her gaudy robes
Stood grand and gorgeously arrayed—
When Indian Summer's mellow light
Had softly faded into night,
And sunshine into deep, dark, shade,
Or, by the moon-light might be seen,
The old-time husking on the green.

Seated around the mighty heap,
The jolly group I see, once more,
Half buried in the flaring husk,
Dimly, I see them in the dusk,
Beneath the spreading sycamore;
Each armed with spear of bone or horn,
They're husking out the gathered corn.

The ears, like flying meteors—
But hold! an ear has struck the light!
And, now, the while the light is out,
I hear the merry laugh and shout,
"O, don't, O, yes, I have the right;"
Hark! yes, the laugh, the shout I hear,—
Some swain has found the scarlet ear!

Before the candle was re-lit
The sinless mischief had been done;
But, no one saw who had been kissed—
She who pretended to resist
The sweeter, only, was when won;
Ah! yes, 'twas he whose face is flushed;
Ah! yes, 'twas she whose cheek has blushed.

But, sober Age with mild reproofs
Appears upon the merry scene;
The laugh and jest are more subdued;
The repartee less brusque and rude,
When old-folks gravely intervene,
And lovely lass and bonny beau
Speak cautiously, in whispers, low.

Now, tricks and jokes and play have ceased
And steadily the work goes on;
Yet, each, alert, improves a chance
To cast a sly, suggestive glance,
And wishes the intruders gone;
As tim'rous mice refrain from play
Until the cat has gone away.

Now did the "old folk" care to stay
And by their presence interfere
With youthful mirth and spirits free,
When hearts o'er flowed with joy and glee,
And jest and song were growing free,
Staid Age, respecting Youth's desire,
Esteemed it prudent to retire.

But not to bed, on husking-night,
Before the old-time grand repast—
The midnight banquet, royal feast
Of fresh roast pork and ducks and geese;
And not until the very last—
The merriest and the best of all,
The huskers' merry midnight ball.

Ye gods, what specimens were these
Of youthful sports in days of yore!
The robust boy and buxom grils
As 'round on 'round they danced and whirled
Upon the rugged kitchen-floor;
Yet, were there fewer sins and crimes
And scandals than in these good times.

Here Ceres held her festival
In autumn, as in Rome, of old;
When crownéd was the aging year
With scarlet leaf and yellow ear,
Earnests of cereal wealth untold;
Her priestesses in rich attire,
Hunting the fox with tail on fire.[12]

Let Ceres and Demeter[13] go—
Old musty Myths of Greece and Rome;
There was much more of solid good
In goddesses of flesh and blood,
Such as the rustics found at home,
Than those of shadowy classic climes
Or storied lands, in ancient times.

No pale cheeks in that merry throng—
No sallowness nor hectic flush;
Sound health in all their faces glowed,
Pure blood through all their bodies flowed,
And dancing did but make it rush
And gush, and tingle, leap and pour,
While waltzing 'round the kitchen-floor.

Nor had typho-malaria
A ghost's chance in such vital air;
No fever-heat, nor ague-chills,
No quinine, and no iron pills;
No noisome flatulency there,
For, fiddle, frolic, dance and play
Kept all the ills of earth away.

What chance for Death or "Hornbook" there—
At such hale country gallopades?
What need of doctors or of quacks,
With their infernal ipecacs,
Or tonics for declining maids—
No need of powders, drops or pills
To cure imaginary ills.

And this is the song the huskers sang
To the tune the fiddlers played,
While over the hills the echoes rang
As long as the huskers stayed.

O! tell me not of a merchant's life,
Or the banker and his hoarded gold,
I'd rather be a farmer's wife
And work as they did of old,
And work as they did of old,
A farmer's daughter shall be my wife—
More precious than heaps of gold.

O! tell me not of a statesman's life,
For statesmen's hearts are hard and cold;
I'd rather be a peasant's wife
And love as they did of old,
And love as they did of old;
A peasant's daughter shall be my wife—
Far better than heaps of gold.

O! tell me not of a monarch's life—
Of honors and wealth untold;
I'd rather be a cobbler's wife
And wear my shoes halfsoled,—
And wear my shoes halfsoled;
A cobbler's daughter shall be my wife
And wear her shoes halfsoled.

O! tell me not of a sailor's life,
Nor, yet, of a soldier bold;
I'd rather be a tailor's wife,
For a tailor's stitches hold,
For a tailor's stitches hold;
A tailor's daughter shall be my wife
And bless me seven fold.

O! tell me not of a preacher's life
For a preacher's pay is poor;
I'd rather be a butcher's wife
For a butcher's meat is sure—
For a butcher's meat is sure;
O, I'd rather be a butcher's wife
For a butcher's meat is sure.

O! tell me not of a doctor's life,
With his skeleton and scroll;
I'd rather be a miller's wife
And live on a dish of toll,
And live on a dish of toll;
A miller's daughter shall be my wife,
And live on a dish of toll.

O! tell me not of a lawyer's life,
And of his fees and special pleas;
I'd rather be a hornet's wife
Or a queen among the bees,
Or a queen among the bees;
I'd rather be a hornet's wife
Or a queen among the bees.

O! tell me not of a miser's life
And his heaps of muck and mould;
I'd rather be a spendthrift's wife
And love as they did of old,
And love as they did of old;
I'd rather be a spendthrift's wife
And love as they did of old.

There's no such life as a farmer's life—
For his worth can ne'er be told;
And I shall be a farmer's wife
And bless him seven fold,
And bless him seven fold;
O, I shall be a farmer's wife—
And bless him seven fold;

O! for an old-time husking, now,
As in the merry days of yore;
O! for the sports of youthful days
And for the old-time works and ways—
The lucky, scarlet ear once more;
O! for the burning kiss it won
From cheeks kissed sweet by the autumn sun!

THE QUILTING.

"It has no golden value—
That simple, patchwork spread;
Its squares, in homely fashion,
Set in with green and red;
But in those faded pieces,
For me are shining bright,
Ah! many a summer morning
And many a winter night."

—Scrap Book—Anon.

A quilt was oft'-times ready framed,
Before the quilters came,
All neatly dressed in homespun goods,
In ruffled caps and quilted hoods
Of antique name and fame.

They came with quaint work-baskets, and
Still quainter reticules;
With snuff and thimbles, chalk, and wax,
With cut-and-dry in paper packs,
Clay pipes and little stools.*

The weather and health were first discussed,
And then, at length, the news;
Next was the waning fire rebuilt,
And quilters seated 'round the quilt,
Their forms and figures chose.

The various figures were laid off
In chalk, or pencil-lines:
One worked an antique vase or jar,
Another worked as pretty a star
As in the heavens shines.

Another worked "the Lover's Heart"—
A broken one—who knows?
Another, still, a pretty fawn,
An eagle, pelican, or swan,
White as the virgin snows.

I see them bending o'er their tasks,
On every stitch intent;
Each striving hard to do her best
To rival and outdo the rest—
On *ne plus ultra* bent.

I hear, methinks, as then I heard,
Just what aunt Betsy said—
"The divil take the blasted witches,
I've lost at least a dozen stitches
By this bewitchéd thread!"

*Footstools.

Methinks I see, as then I saw,
Her almost toothless grin;
As, then, I saw her vainly try
To penetrate her needle's eye,
And then her sharp chagrin;

And, as a dame of younger sight,
True hand and kindly heart,
And reverence for an older head,
Then took the needle and the thread
And did the noble part.

And, so they quilted and they talked,
Watching the old-time clock;
Passed 'round the pipe and took a puff,
Passed 'round the box and took a snuff—
Sat back, awhile, and rocked.

What wonder that such stimulants
Should raise a lively breeze!
The pipe glows with celestial fire—
Its fragrant fumes their tongues inspire—
Good heavens! what a sneeze!

At every sneeze there was a breeze
As when the chargers neigh
Amid the roar of musketry,
Charged, muzzle-deep, with Pike's Rappee,
Or "Congress," in its day;

Or, the *gewaltig* Schneeberger—
Almost as white as snow;
Nor did it ever fail to chase
The wrinkles from an aged face
Or set it in a glow.

These were the snuffs our fathers and
Our mothers gave the praise;
There was a virtue in those snuffs
Not found in any of the stuffs
Of our more *smoky* days.

O, would there were some power that could
Those happy days restore;
Alas! our snuffers sneeze no more
On Pike's Rappee or hellebore,
As in those days of yore!

But, now, enough of puff and snuff—
Our quilters yawned and sighed;
Again they look up at the clock—
Hark! at the door a gentle knock!
Behold, it opens wide:

It opens wide—that dingy door—
And so do mouths and eyes!
And now, "O, my!" make way, make way!
For cakes and wine upon a tray—
O, what a grand surprise!

They munch the lusty ginger-cake
And sip the currant wine;
Now cake and *wine* their tongues inspire—
Their conversation rises higher,
And they begin to shine.

O, mocking wine! so dost thou oft'
Content us with our lot;
While upturned spec's bestride the head
And cheeks and nose are turning red
Life's troubles are forgot'.

Such conversation as that was
No otherwhere was heard—
Where nine good talkers, for the nonce,
All spoke the same thing, all at once,
And each the final word.

And, thus, revived and reassured,
The work goes bravely on;
They laugh, they talk, they sneeze, they jest,
Still, each one tries to do her best
And bravely holds her own.

How pleasant and how fair the sight,
When women thus agree!
And how like homage paid to truth,
When Age thus dons the bloom of youth
At three score years and—three.

And, still, the work goes bravely on—
'Tis *work* a quilt adorns—
They little dream that 'neath that spread
Some conquor'd hero may lie dead,
Or statesman may be born.

They know, indeed, it may adorn
Some humble bridal-bed,
But little dream, that when they're gone,
That faded patch-work quilt may form
The shroud of "Union-dead,"

That on the field of Gettysburg,
When they have passed away,
A kindly service it may do,
As cover for the "Union Blue,"
Or, e'en the "Rebel Gray."

Or, that some sick or wounded one,
Of some brave union-band,
In his dire suff'ring and distress,
Might recognize a sister's dress,
Or some kind mother's hand.

Yet, still, the work goes bravely on—
Work that the quilt adorns;
But now, of headache one complains,
Another of rheumatic pains,
Another of her corns,

Which like old Probabilities,
But "seldom ever" fail
To "indicate"—as goes the phrase—
The coming clear or rainy days,
The snows, the frost and hail.

Says one, "just look at Mrs. Grove—
Indeed, this woman's sick!
Get the camphor! she's going to faint—
Hysterics! O, that mean complaint—
Bring camphor! hartshorn! quick!"

Another wants the doctor "fetched"
And thinks she should be bled;
Another calls for camomile—
"Before the doctor comes three mile'
This woman may be dead!"

"Just get her on the bed," says one,
"And make some bitter tea—
Old man, old woman, homely things—
Open her cap and apron strings,—
Now, let us wait and see!"

But, Mrs. Commonsense, at last
Thus raised her voice and spoke—
"Let those who will, the tea prepare,
Just open the door and get fresh air—
This air's enough to choke!"

The kitchen-door was opened, wide,
And in the odors came—
Of coffee, ham-and-eggs and steaks,
Of sausage, biscuit, flannel-cakes,
To cheer the fainting dame.

She raised her head, she smiled and said,
"I want no bitter tea;
And never mind about fresh air—
A cup of good strong, coffee's air
And tea enough for me."

'Twas brought, and drank with good effect,
And then, with one accord,
The good old dames profoundly sighed—
"But for that coffee she had died—
For coffee, *thank the Lord!*"

O, coffee! what hast thou not done
For suff'ring woman-kind!
What triumphs hast thou not achieved
O'er doctors' doses and relieved
The body and the mind!

And now the sumptuous table's spread,
And all the guests sit 'round;
Now mother sits in father's place,
And gracefully she says a grace
In silence most profound.

So, now, the savory feast proceeds
And "good digestion waits
On appetite," while cheerful girls
With glowing cheeks and flowing curls
Attend and help the plates.

There were fair Rose and Sarah Jane,
And gentle, lovely Ruth—
As fair as Job's immortal three—
In whom each aged dame might see
Her own, once blooming, youth.

The fainting one no more is faint—
She laughs and talks and eats,
Forgetful of her late distress—
Indulges not a whit the less
In cakes and pies and meats.

'Though she got sick, she's glad she came—
She could not well have missed;
And lest she might fastidious seem,
She deserts on preserves and cream,
For, how could she resist?

And so they sit and chat and sip
And praise the rich repast;
Inquire how this and that was made—
How much for this and that was paid,
How much of this and that it takes
To make such new-styled fancy cakes;
And at the very last
Each one, just for a final sup,
Consents to take "just *half* a cup,"
But erring goodness fills it up.

(What real benefits we lose
In *more* instead of *less!*
The golden mean no mischief works—
It's in the overflow, where lurks
The siren of excess.)

Their cups were followed by their pipes—
Their pipes by still more chat;
They talked of,—Heaven knows only what,
But I, alas, have now forgot'
More than the half of that.

They talked of matrimonial things,
And of elopements, more;
And most of all, that *latest* one—
That cunning one of farmer John
And his belov'd 'Lenore.*

But, still, there was another thing—
In this they were preplexed;
In gossip, 'though all posted well,
The newsiest one could not, just, tell
Who would be married next.

But e'er the quilters separate
The quilt must be complete;
So, each one, now, resumes her place
And quietly they quilt a race—
No telling where they'll meet.†

Methinks I hear, as then, I heard,
The purring of the cat,
But did not hear a woman speak—
"The golden silence of the Greek"
Now took the place of chat.

And when the handy work is done
I know they won't decline—
That is to say, refuse to take
Just one more slice of that good cake.
And one sm-a-ll glass of wine.

*See the last poem in Olden Times.
†Quilting from opposite sides.

And when the noble task was done—
Of labor, skill and love—
'Twas like a starry decoration,
Or some bright, glorious, constellation
In that blue vault above.

Thus, were the finest bed-quilts made
By hands,—at rest up there;
O, for the slumbers once enjoyed
Beneath such covers, unannoyed
By trouble, pain ,or care!

Time never wearies in his flight—
His march no truce delays;
As quilts were made by thrifty wives,
So various are our checkered lives,
And passing are our days—
As quilts, at firesides made and rolled,
Our lives like fireside tales are told.

HALLOWEEN.

Among the bonnie winding banks
Where Doon rins whimplin clear;
Where Bruce once ruled the martial ranks,
And shook his Carrick spear,
Some merry, friendly, countra folks
Together did convene
To burn their nits an pou' their stocks
An' haud their Halloween
Fu' blythe that night.
—BURNS.

HOW gay and jolly was the night—
Of many an old-time Halloween;
A feast for saints, all-holy, all,
Yet very seldom, if at all,
A sober saint was to be seen
At such a feast, for, little meat
There was prepared for saints to eat.

On Halloween in other lands,
From whence our worthy fathers came—
Among Auld Scotia's storied hills,
Along its babbling brooks and rills,
So rich in rare poetic fame,
Witches and wizards, elves and de'ils[14]
Joined in the merry mid-night reels.

But true and honest country-folks—
Folks young and gay and single—
Those true and honest country-folks
Once played their charms and cracked their jokes
Around the cheerful, blazing, "ingle,"
And pulled and "shouthered runts o' kail"
And cracked their nuts and drank their ale.

A youthful couple, hand in hand,
And very closely bandaged eyes,
Would, thus, into the garden walk,
And, blindly pull a cabbage-stalk[15]
Whose form and features, shape, and size,
'Twas understood, were true to life,
Of future husband or of wife.[16]

So, were the tedious hours beguiled
By many a merry lad and lass:
In kail and flax, in nuts[17] and yarn,[18]
In midnight winnowings in the barn,[19]
Or looking in the magic glass,[20]
The airy being sought and feared,
In some mysterious way appeared.

O, many were the strange mishaps
Of many a rude and luckless wight;
And many were the tricks and charms,[21]
And many were the wild alarms,
On that wild, weird mysterious, night!
And many an ancient legend tells
Of fairy dance and wizard-spells;

Among the rugged rocks and caves,
Dim lighted by the friendly moon—
Upon the weird winding banks
"Where Bruce ance ruled his martial ranks"—
The storied banks "O, Bonny Doon,"
As every reader knows who turns
The mellow leaves of Robert Burns.

In this unstoried land of ours
Not such was merry Halloween;
No random pulling of the "kail,"
No roasting nuts, no foaming ale,
No dance upon the homestead green;
No sowing of the hemp or flax
Nor pulling straws from oaten stacks.

With far less rev'rence for the saints
Or faith in charms or magic spell—
To superstition less inclined,
In magic arts, all unrefined—
Our old time Halloweens but smelled
Of cabbages, which by the scores
We hurled against the neighbors' doors.

The battering-rams of ancient times,
Or modern arts and arms of war—
The mortars, bombs, and bursting shells,
With union shouts and rebel yells
And angry, belching, cannons' roar,
All were but tame and quiet scenes
Compared with our old Halloweens.

A rustic regiment of boys,
And rustic girls as brave as they,
Well armed with sturdy cabbage-heads
While honest folks, all in their beds
In peaceful dreams and slumbers lay,
In rude, but old-time—honored sport
Assailed the undefended fort.

One such bombardment I recall—
At good old neighbor Johnny Brown's;
To see what all this was about,
Old Johnny and his dame came out
In their nocturnal, nether gowns,
When lo! a well-directed runt
Struck Johnny in—well, not in front.

Dumbfounded, he, a moment stood
Beneath the overhanging eaves,
While "bursting shells" their fragments threw,
And all around the pieces flew—
Runts, broken hearts and shatter'd leaves;
What wonder he should run in fear
From such hell-fire in his rear.

Though many more as stout as he,
Such furious fire might not withstand;
Yet, fearless, valiant, Mrs. Brown,
More brave than Johnny, stood her ground,
With broomstick in her sturdy hand—
She'd break the first one's head, she said,
Who'd throw another cabbage-head.

And now, old Johnny re-appeared,
A looking quite subdued, though grieved:
'Twas Halloween! was our excuse,
Inscribed upon a flag of truce,
And so respected and received
By Johnny, and his valiant dame,
Whose honored guests we now became.

We gathered up the kail *debris*
That lay about the porch and door;
We gathered 'round the blazing hearth,
And there we swore, for what 'twas worth,
That *we* would do so, never more;
But understood, "no more" to mean,
No more 'till next year's Halloween.

Of this our mental reservation,
Nor John, nor Betsy ever knew,
Their house and hearts were open, wide,
And of their best they did provide
And sent not far—for fiddling Joe;
For, Joe was never far away
When there were tunes or tricks to play.

And in the great old fire-place—
That heaven for darkies here below,
Upon a block he sat him down,
Unenvious of a monarch's crown,
And rosin'd up his ready bow,
While itching toes and buoyant heels
Stood ready for the rustic reels.

And soon the merry dance began
As over the oaken kitchen floor
We danced with all the young Miss. Browns—
Clad in their linsey-woolsey gowns—
Until our very toes were sore ;
While old folks, freed from care and toil
Sat, smoked, and quaffed their cider-oil.

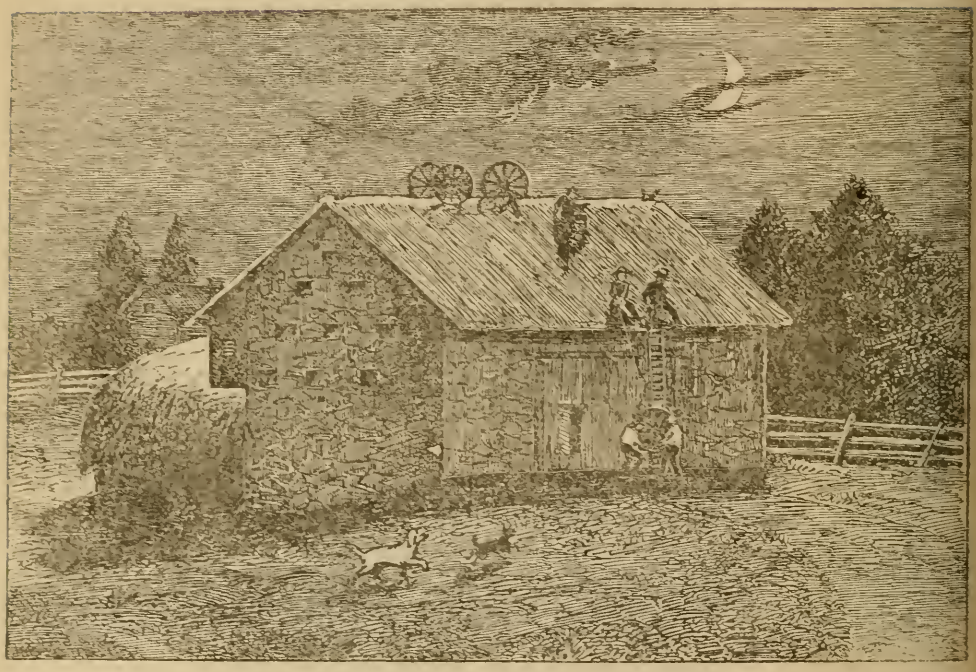
And while the dance was going on,
A panel of the kitchen door
Flew out ; and thereupon a runt flew in
And hit old Johnny on the shin !
What wonder that he cursed and swore
By all the saints, "the devil was loose
And riding on a tailor's goose."

But maugre all, the dance went on—
No hitch nor halting in Scotch reels ,
The more old Johnny cried, "aye ! aye !"
The thicker did the cabbage fly—
The faster went the clattering heels ;
'Till John and Betsy, both, cried out,
"There's witches, elves, and de'ils about !"

In came another company
Of merry boys and merrier girls,
Alert with playful pranks and freaks—
With sparkling eyes and glowing cheeks,
And O, what waving, flowing curls,
To add new beauty to the scene,
On that good old-time Halloween.

"More water on our mill !" we cried,—
And then, again, the dance went on ;
And many a runt was kicked around,
And many a heart was crushed and ground,
And many went where more had gone—
Across the fence to feed the pigs,
Whilst we kept dancing reels and jigs !

Old Betty seized the poker, then,
And stirred the dull and waning fire;
Ten thousand sparks arose and flew,
Like meteors, up the chimney-flue—
And swift as meteors they expired;
So do our merry times and friends—
So we, when death the pageant ends.

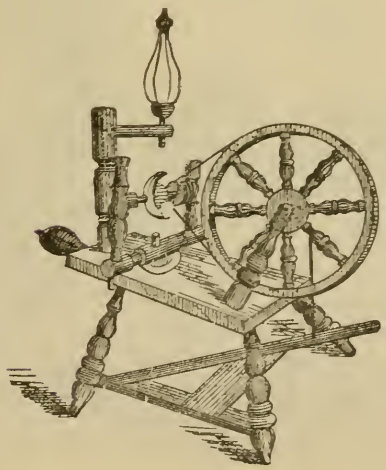


At length, the old folks went to bed—
To speak politely, they retired;
But we danced on till past midnight,
And sang and played till near daylight,
But never, never, were too tired,
Nor ever thought it sin or harm
To put Smith's wagon on his barn.

In fact, this was the final act
In serio-comic Halloween;
Nor was the play esteemed complete
Without this mad, Herculean feat—
And foolish, final midnight scene;
And who, but neighbor Johnny Brown,
Should help Smith get his wagon down?

Farewell to dear old Halloween—
To merry song and dance and play;
To home and hearth and back-log-fire—
The torch that did our hearts inspire
When life was young and spirits gay;
Farewell to *all* the hallowed scenes
That blessed and cheered our Halloweens.

But, still, the world is better, now—
O, Progress! O, Reform! Reform!
Instead of throwing cabbage-runts—
Against our neighbors' French plate fronts,
The boys and girls throw grains of corn!
And I sing in these homespun rhymes
The cultured manners of the times.



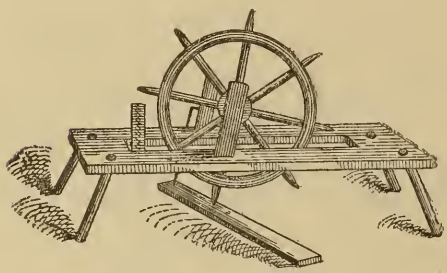
AUTUMN.

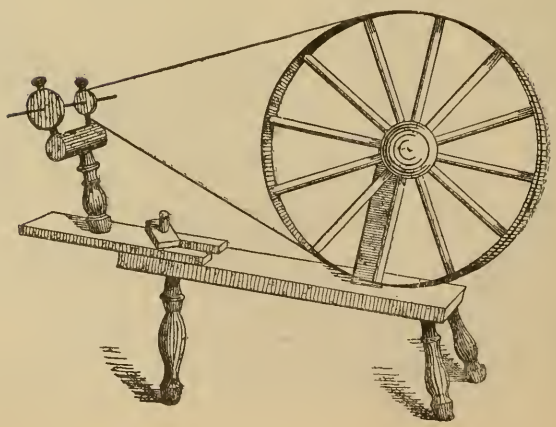
WHEN summer's various works were done,
And frost-seared woods looked dull and dead—
When fields in their autumnal green
Lay bathed in calm and hazy sheen,
And singing summer-birds had fled
November-days came, dull, and warm,
Mild heralds of the coming storm.

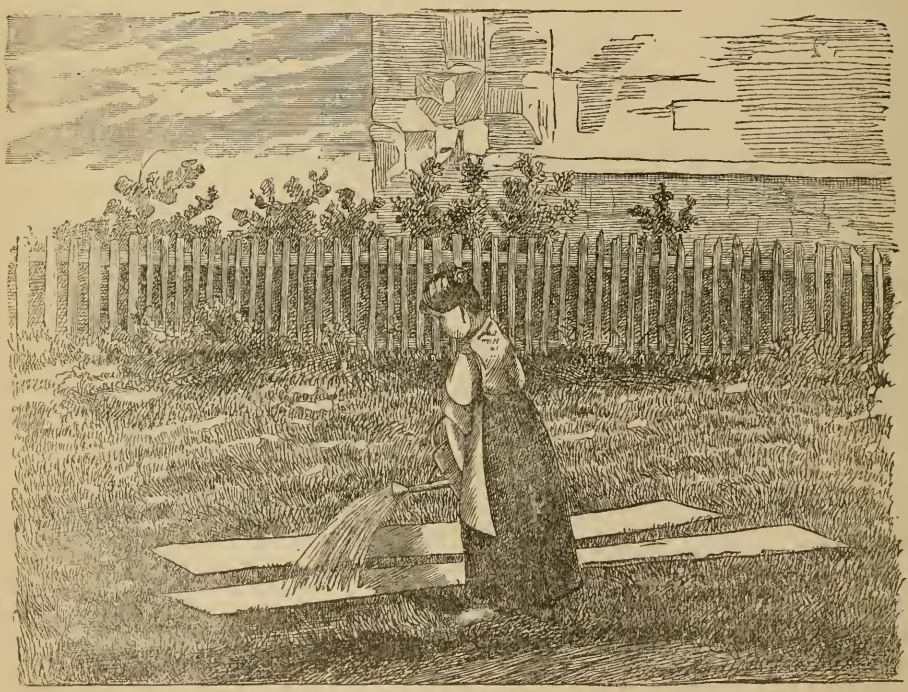
'Twas then the ruddy apple-heaps,
Beneath their conic caps of straw,
Were carefully enhedged around
With genteel coats of mellow ground,
Against the autumn's freeze and thaw,
And all surving cabbage-heads,
Inverted stood, in garden-beds.

And all the fruits and grains were housed
And ample cellars amply stored—
Yet, not with ashes, coal and wood,
But luscious viands—royal food—
To crown the farmers' ample board
With plenty, when the snows should come
And re-inspire the love of home.

And on the old-time garret, too,
With rugged oaken lumber floored—
Around the great stone chimney, there,
The gathered nuts, with jealous care,
All nicely hulled and snugly stored,
In various thrifty, careful, ways,
To cheer the coming holidays.







And from the gnarléd rafters, there,
And from the rough-hewn collar-beams
There hung the fragrant herbs and teas—
Those ounce-preventives of disease,
We sometimes see in pleasant dreams—
More efficacious, safe, and sure
Than *pounds* of patent humbug cure.

And there, too, hung the hanks of flax
Above the waiting spinning-wheels;
There lay the waiting woolen rolls,
All ready for the whirring spools;
And there, too, stood the ready reels
And winders, and each seemed to yearn
To do its duty in its turn.

THRESHING.

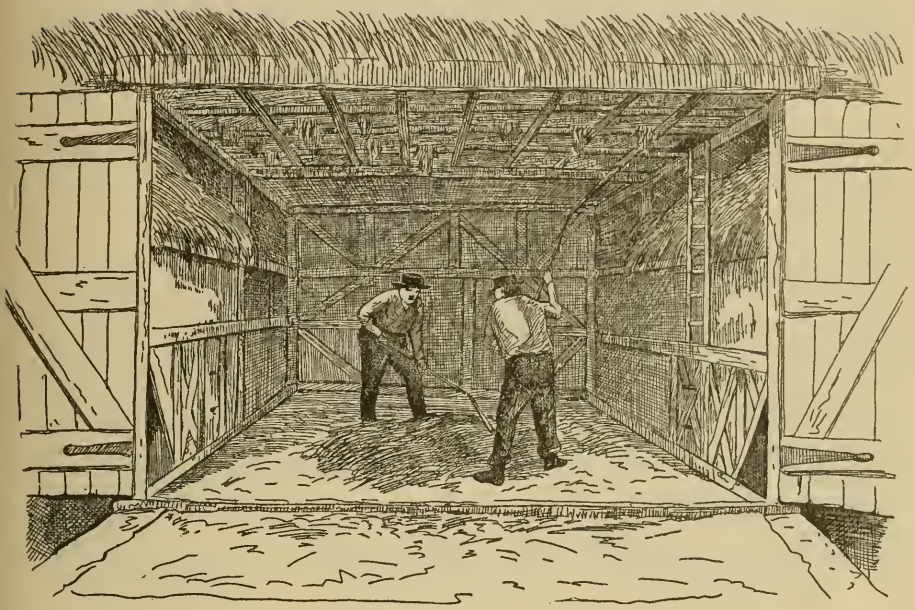
Dreams of my youthful days! I'd freely give
E'er my life's close,
All the dull days I'm destined yet to live
For one of those.
—BARANGER.

A day of freedom never made
The rustic love his labors less;
'Twas not alone in romps and plays,
Or joyous sports on holidays—
Still less in vice or idleness,—
That he a sweet enjoyment found,
But e'en in many a rural sound.

From out the old, log, straw-thatched barn,
He heard the thuddings of the flail,
And echoings from the distant wood,
And from the fields, in merry mood,
The peaceful pipings of the quail;
While from the distant hills were borne
The stirring notes of hound and horn.

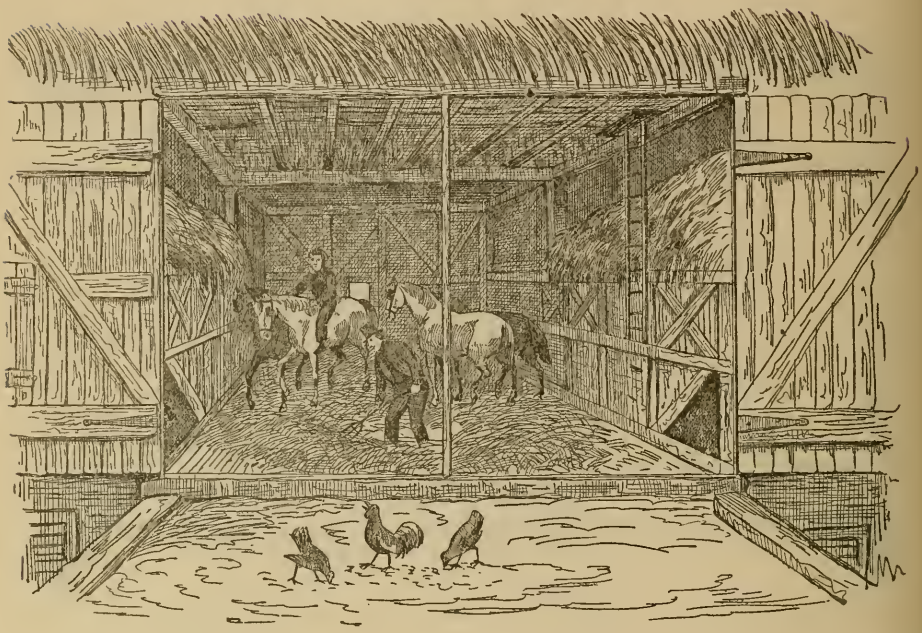
How patiently the threshers threshed,
And, though we see them nomore, now,
I well remember how I saw
Them bundle up the golden straw
And stow the bundles in the mow;
Huge bundles, strong, but neatly bound,
Like maidens' waists, so firm and round.

So did the threshers thresh the rye—
Thump, *thump*, thump, *thump!* the livelong day;
And, still, I see the brawny wrist
And supple elbow's skillful twist,
In that expert, peculiar, way,
That made the grain, like spray ascend,
And, then, in rattling showers descend.



Thus, faithfully the threshers toiled
And hardly earned their meagre pay,
Which, with the potluck threshers got,
Was, at the most, a tithe of what
They threshed out on a winter-day;
Yét, what cared they for golden wealth,
With labor's joy and robust health?

(The poets, also, have their toils
And overtax the weary brain;
They thresh, and thresh, and turn their leaves,
As threshers turned and threshed their sheaves,
To hoard the heaps of golden grain,
E'en then, the work is done but half,
Until they've winnowed out the chaff;



Or, 'till the trash is weeded out
And with the waste is thrown away;
And, so, their part is but a tithe
Of what the sickle or the scythe
Have got and gathered, night and day;
Yet what care they for golden gain,
With literary name and fame?)

So threshed they not the treasured wheat—
With eelskin-coupled hickory flail;
The patient horses tramped it out
While lazily they walked about,
All tied and tethered nose to tail;
Nor could the drowsy rider keep,
In endless rounds, from going to sleep.

And in the midst there stood the man
Whose tedious task it was to turn,
And turn, with shaking fork,
The tangled mass, and keep at work
Until the weary work was done—
'Till none, save flat and empty heads
Remained within those trodden beds.

Then, "horses out!"—the boy would fain
Obey the farmer's sharp command—
Like bummers, slow to quit the ring
Their feet so long have trodden in,
The while the urgent heel and hand
And many sharp, but useless "heps!"
All fail to speed their lazy steps.

They hesitate, they stare, they snort,
They start, they go, they stop, they hoove;
Then, down the bank with awkward tread,
Expanded nostrils, dizzy head,
The lazy, jaded, trampers move:
Then, tied to fence, whereat they gnaw,
Or, with impatience, neigh and paw.

Meanwhile, the busy shakers shook
The wheat from out the tangled straw;
Then pitch'd the straw into the mow,
As bed for horse, or board for cow;
And ah! how many a fun I saw,
While helping, oft', to "work it back"
Or cram with chaff the homespun sack.

On such a bed of wheaten straw,
Or trodden chaff, as soft as down,
Weary of labors, hale with joys,
The farmers and the farmers' boys,
And buxom girls in wollen gowns,
Enjoyed an undisturbed repose,
Dreaming of sweethearts, or of beaus.

In bedsteads, humble, neat and plain,
Braced up with sturdy with hempen cords,
As tight as old Jo's fiddle-strings—
Without a mattress, slats, or springs,
We, romping, rustic, rural lords
Reclined and slept and dreamed and snored,
While wintry storms around us roared.

There, in those humble beds we slept,
Without a pain or earthly care;
Without a carpet on the floor;
With rusty horse-shoe o'er the door,—
A door supported by a chair—
We felt nor feared an earthly ill,
Nor witch, nor bogle, ghost nor de'il.

And when a threshing spell was done,
Still grain and chaff together lay—
There came from dell and wooded hill
The echoings of the winnowing-mill,
While winnowing the chaff away
From wheat or rye—and all day long,
The merry voice and cheerful song.

There, in that old Swiss, straw-thatched barn,
Upon that rugged oaken floor,
Among the straw, or fragrant hay,
I'd rather be a boy to day—
As Byron sighed to be, once more,
Than be by armies kept enthroned,
With all the wealth that Croesus owned.

Yes, stand behind the winnowing-mill
And scrape the golden grains away,
As down the wooden plane they rolled,
Yellow and rich as pure "old gold,"
(As now a days they sing and say,)
And pile it high, until knee-deep,
I'd stand amid the growing heap.

Oft' did I stretch to hold the bag
While father slowly measured up
The grain—the bags to fill—
All ready for the waiting mill
To grind the grist or garner up;
And as he filled, he kept the score
With chalk, upon the wall, or door.

There was a charm, I can't describe,
In every old-time rural sound
Of honest work, in barn or field,—
No other sounds can ever yield;
And as the years roll swiftly 'round
And bring me near life's final goal,
The ceaseless echoings haunt my soul.

Where e'er I am, where e'er I go,
I hear these echoings, night and day;
The song of haying girls, so blithe,
The music of the mower's scythe,
While on the fragrant swath I lay
And watched the moving clouds above,—
Lost in my youthful dream of love.

CATCHING ELVES.

"Every elf and fairy sprite
Hops as light as bird from brier."

'TWAS on a cold and dreary winter-night,
And in the merry, merry, olden time,
When boisterous Boreas, in a fearful gale,
Swept forest, fen, and field, and hill and dale—
Terrific, and, yet none the less sublime—
That in some secret homestead nook, retired,
The rustic wags, for scaly tricks conspired.

How relished was the roguish elfine trick
Played by the old-time rural youngsters, when,
On such a cold and bleak and stormy night,
They fooled some verdant, unsuspecting wight
Abroad, into some weird and narrow glen,
There, doomed, to hold the bag, all by himself,
To catch and hold the airy, legendary elf!

The elf-trick, in those merry days, was thought
A most refreshing and a healthful game—
To put a "green one" on a stormy stand,
With open, wide-mouthed, homespun bag in hand,
And, there to wait for elves that never came,
Though all the knowing ones—the guilty wags—
Feigned driving elves from woods and rocks and hills and crags;

Though, all-the-while, the tricksters had returned
And gathered round the homestead hearth, or stove;
The faithful fool who held the hempen sack,
With freezing hands and stooping, aching back,
Still waited vainly, for the elfine drove
Of airy, fairy, mocking myths and sprites
That were abroad on such old-time midwinter-nights.

At length, the victim of the roguish ruse,
Half frozen, stiff, and looking badly hagg'd,
Returned, chop-fallen, sullen, and befooled,
But to be mocked, and teased and ridiculed,
And realizing it was only *he* was bagg'd!
Thus, did each unsuspecting youth, in turn,
The old-time elfine-trick mischievous, bear and learn.

And as the merry, mischief-making boy—
'Tis truly said, is "father to the man"—
So, of each youthful trick and cunning art,
We find, in riper age, the counterpart,—
Of what in youthful, naughty tricks began—
And men's more serious, business, works, and ways
Are mirrored in their boyish games and tricks and plays.

Nor is it, only, in such games as these,
The gaping bag is, ever, held in vain;
But e'en in these our fast, progressive days—
Of sharper wits, and, ah! more crooked ways—
Of Godless greed for naught but golden gain,
The baggers, oftentimes are "bagged" themselves,
As he who held the bag, in olden-times, for elves.

When, on a cold, bright, windy, winter-night,
We gaze into the azure, storm-swept sky,
We see the same old gay and glittering stars
And planets—chiefly our old neighbor, Mars—
And think of some such nights, in years gone by;
But when we look around, how strange! how strange!
In all things else we see, how great, how great the change!

Yea, in that blue, ethereal vault, above,
Behold all things we see, remain the same—
As lights to us, on this terrestrial ball—
As HE, who in his wisdom, made them all,
And numbers, yea, and calls them all by name;
The same old, glorious stars that shone so bright
On old-time Halloween, or stormy, elf-trick night.

Thus, rise, my Muse, from baser scenes below,
And contemplate the beautiful and true;
The great and glorious orb that rules the day,
The moon, the stars, the heavenly, Milky-Way[22]—
How grand, how soul-inspiring is the view!
All, all, as then, their several courses hold,
As in the merry, merry, days and nights of old.

And, still, for ages still to come, they'll shine,
And still, in HIM who made them will we trust;
And many a youth of those long, by-gone, days,
Who joined his comrades in their works and plays,
Though here he sleeps with his own kindred dust,
Yet, who shall say he liveth not afar
In that unchanged, forever twinkling, radiant star?

THE WINTER CARNIVAL

Homely scenes and simple views,
Lowly thoughts may best infuse.
—KEBLE.

OUR worthy fathers and our model mothers, too,
Were lords and ladies, in their own plain way;
And winter's cold and breezes, pure, and fresh,
Brought health and strength and appetite for flesh;
And, O! the unctuous, old-time, boist'rous, butchering-day,
With all its works,—'twas none the less
They *loved* the day, and aye, the savory mess.

Ye gods, ye gory gods, of beastly flesh and blood!
And you, ye priests of carnal appetites,
Look down upon this rude, domestic scene—
Solve us the myths and myst'ries of the spleen[23]—
Preside, ye, gravely, o'er these old-time, homely rites—
In entrails of the bullock, ox, and swine,
Our several fortunes and our fates divine.[24]

And you, ye old magicians, with your waving wands.
Attend, and charm the boiling, seething, mass;
Ye soothsayers, and ye wise astrologers,
Come forth, and while the maid the mixture stirs,
Make, ye, the weird and shadowy omens quickly pass,
While up and down the dusky chimney, wide,
Black witches on their well-worn broom-sticks ride.

But, while Saint Dunstan's charméd horse-shoe overhangs
The rugged crane, where hangs the iron kettle,
The blackest witch that e'er escaped from hell,
Can't ply her art, or, there, apply her spell,
Nor e'en essay to pass the horse-shoe's magic metal,
The while the maid the mixture stirs and sings
Sweet stanzas from Saint Dunstan's holy hymns.

Such were some of the Stygian, stagnant, lessons of
Old Superstition's dark and lurid lore;
And, ah! how many a legend, weird and wild,
Was made to haunt the hapless, rustic child!
But, thanks, O, Progress, haply, haunt it, now, nomore,
'Though slow thou art, to bring the good and true,
They come, apace, and bad and false pass out of view.

Then, let the rustic maiden fair, the fire share,
And stir the seething, steaming, mass of meat
The Jew may chew his cud and *es*chew swine,
Yet, when thus fixed and mixed and "chopper-ed" fine,

He, with his Gentile host will not refuse to eat;
While his poor conscience, with her "still small voice,"
Seldom, or never, disapproves the choice.

Methinks I see my father bending o'er his task,
With snow-white napkin pinned about his head;
As, while the pudding-meat is being boiled,
The luscious sausage in the tub are coiled—
Pressed through the old tin horn, stuffed tight, and cherry-red—
In clear and clean, translucent skins, encased,
All nicely spiced and seasoned to the taste.

Methinks I see my sainted mother, standing by,
Intent to keep all things in proper shape;
Her anxious eye is fixed upon the work,
And skillfully she plies the table-fork,
And lets superfluous air and wind escape,
Lest the o'erburdened case, perchance, should burst,
And mar the beauty of the joyous wurst.

"A thing of beauty," as the poet, fitly, saith—
"A thing of beauty and a joy forever,"
Whose ancient origin the world knows not*—
Whose worth and goodness ne'er can be forgot—
Though, to forget, we sometimes would endeavor.
Without his beans and bacon, could the Yankee live?
Nor could his wurst, the Teuton, long survive.

Such was the winter-carnival—called butch'ring day—
Among the rustics, in the days of yore;
When bullock, ox, and swine laid down their lives
To rifle-ball, or axe, or fresh-ground knives;
And, as of old, died, welt'ring in their steaming gore;
And, even now, as then, yield sty and stall,
And field, to man's dominion over all.

*Perhaps Goettingen.

Jocund, and fragrant was the old-time rural kitchen
With wholesome garden-herbs and spices, then—
Sweet marjoram, corriander, garlic, thyme—
And others, which, perhaps, would hardly rhyme;
(Or, if they should, yet, hardly grace a poet's pen)
But—*nota bene*—on the side-room-shelf,
There stood Black Betty, label'd, "Help Yourself."

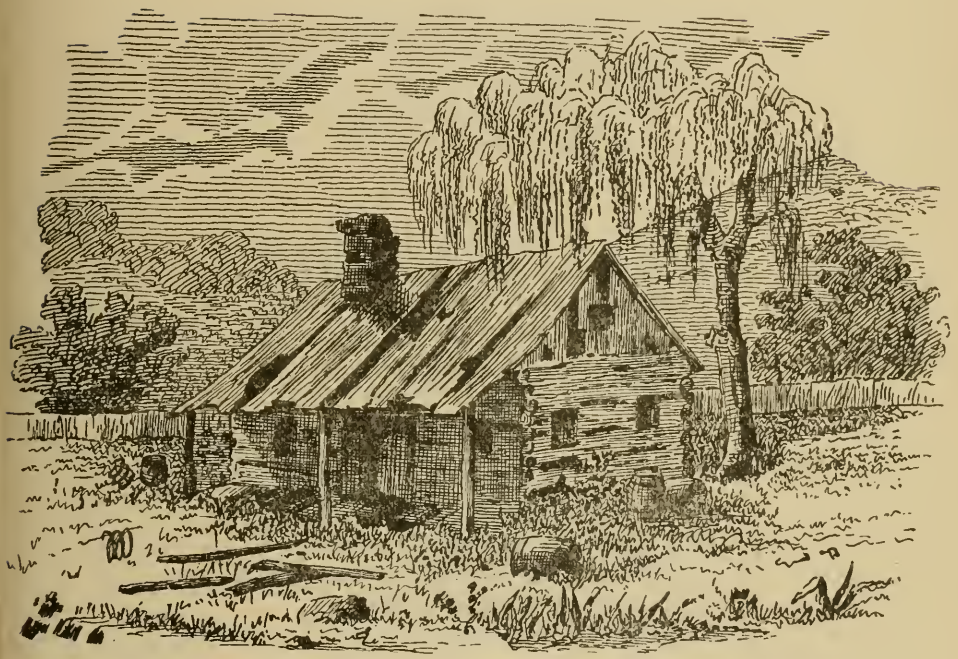
And help themselves they freely did, as need required—
The stalwart butchers, suffering from thirst—
John Barleycorn could make their labors light,
And give a keener edge to appetite
For the coming feast of sausage, souse and "liver-wurst;"
And many a weighty bet was lost, or won—
To him who lost, the bet was all in fun.

What wondrous changes in one winter-day were wrought!
Where were the entrails at the dawn of day?
Within the bodies of the doomed swine;
And where were the swine at the day's decline?
Within their entrails stuffed and deftly hung away;
And now, with sausage hanging up and bullocks salted down,
Let snows descend and winter rage and frown.

But one thing more, and, though the last, yet, not the least—
There was the gen'rous, old-time metzel-soup,[25]
Which, 'twas the custom, at such times, to send
To every neighbor, relative, and friend;
Not lent, nor given with grudge, or, less *recoup*,
But by the goodly dame, as Heav'n had taught her,
In faith and hope, as bread cast on the water.

THE STILL-HOUSE.

"Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misused wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transform'd,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's island fell; (who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmed cup,
Whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine?)
This nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks
With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, 'ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom, therefore, she brought up, and Comus named:"
—MILTON.



O, unpoetic, gloomy haunt,
Wherein to court the gentle Muse!
Yet I'm resolved that even here
I'll seek her, and my suit prepare,
Since she can but refuse.

But no, for e'en in places dark
And dingy, now, with hoary age—
Yea, horrible and old as hell—
The heavenly goddess deigns to dwell
And limn the poet's page.

Then, why not hope that here she may
With power of simple song imbue
Her humblest votary, and smile
E'en on his rude and rustic style—
Be but the picture true?

Yea, fonder far of old than new,
The poet and the Muse agree;
As ivies to the ruins cling,
And birds in primal forests sing—
In Nature's temples, free.

The man of business-cares cares not
To keep aught but his lucre long;
But we find treasures in the vast,
Or humblest ruins of the past,
And keep them fresh in song.

There is an art more old than Pan,—
For, it was known in Noah's day—
That turned the juice of fruits and grain,
And, even, of the fruitless cane,
From Nature's harmless way.

A "black art," all mysterious[26]—
For, only what we see we know—
That, even now, much more than then,
It turns the hearts and heads of men,
And sometimes all awry they go.

By whom discovered, Heaven knows—
By Noah, or his wife, or sons;
But Noah, as we read, began
To plant and be a husbandman—
For, so the story runs;

A husbandman began to be—
The first to cultivate the vine;
Did *he* the cunning art invent,—
To make the harmless juice ferment—
That made him drunken in his tent?
Or was it virgin wine?

Let those who can, the answer give—
Let Prohibition still resolve—
Four thousand years, and more, his still
Has Bacchus run, and likely will,
While planets shall revolve.

As long as Rhine and Rhone shall flow
And their bright hills with vines are clad—
While rain shall fall or sun shall shine,
Or mortals toil, there will be wine,
To make their hearts be glad.

If unfermented juice of grapes,
Of old, did not intoxicate,
Then, in those rude, primeval times,
There *must* have been fermented wines,
As now, to dissipate.

We know what work Reform has done
To quench the alcoholic fire;
But, who was first to use the still,
We know not now, nor ever will,
'Though we may still inquire

Inquire of still less ancient times—
The records of the land of Sin*—
Or, of the medieval day,
When that old land was called Cathay,—
When did this art begin?

And, still, the quest incites pursuit,
While we our weary search maintain—
Inspiring hope lures on and on
To vine-clad hills of sweet Ceylon,
And, still, the search is vain.

But whether in celestial Sin,
Or in the isle of sweet Ceylon[27]—
Somewhere in the old Orient
It took its rise, and, westward bent,
It *still* is marching on.

From Orient to Orient—
Its march lies through this land of ours;
And, marching with the march of man,
Seems destined where the race began—
In Eden's waiting bowers.

And marching westward, as we learn,
From Albion's† historic pen,
One Albucasis[28] was the first
To quench the alcoholic thirst
Among good Englishmen.

The English loved their whiskey then—
They love good ale and whiskey, still—
And when they conquored Eringobragh,
The Irish drank their *usquebagh*[29]
And, likely, ever will.

*Ancient name of China.
†Ancient name of England.

WHY MEN DRINK.

If on my theme I rightly think,
There are five reasons why men drink;—
Good wine; a friend; because I'm dry;
Or, lest I should be, by and by,
Or—any other reason why.
—Dr. Hy. Aldrich.

THE Irish drank their *usquebagh*,
The Scotch, their home-brewed barley bree,
Or "blood" of bold John Barleycorn;
But in what country was he born,
Or from what goodly land was he?
All that the antiquarian knows—
John lived among the Pharaos.[30]

Yea, in the time of Ceres'* sway,[31]
Libations freely flowed in ale;
And later on, in Albion,
We find Lord John improved upon
By Messrs. Baverstock and Thrale;[32]
And now, the *world's* pledged in a glass
Of London Brownstout, or, of Bass.[33]

And ah! poor Mary Queen of Scots,
In her forlorn imprisonment;
Found for her troubled heart *some* cheer,
In drinking of the famous beer
From famous Burton-upon-Trent,[34]
Which hath the common beverage been
Of lord, of peasant, and of queen.

*Goddess of corn, etc.

So then, we find John Barleycorn,
A man of royal origin;
And *usquebagh* and barley-bree
Together came across the sea
In company with Holland gin;
And here, among the brave and free,
Have reared a mighty dynasty.

Down through the ages came these arts—
From East to West, across the sea;
The men who brought the Bible here,
Brought here the art of brewing beer
And ale, and drank their barley-bree:
They founded Princeton, Cambridge, Yale,
But drank their whiskey, wine, and ale.

But who shall censure them for this,
Or honor them a whit the less?
Were they arraigned, what would they say?
They'd plead the customs of the day;
And truth and justice would confess—
When Ignorance, herself, is wise
'Twere folly to be *other*wise.

Our simple, rural ancestors,
As matter of economy,
Set up their stills to raise their gales*
And drank their whiskies, gins, and ales,
But always drank them moderately,
Except, perhaps, on holidays,
Or, when there was a barn to raise.[35]

O! for the good old moderate times
Which have been, but, no more can be;
Each farmer had his still-house, then,
And stilled his surplus fruit and grain;
From exciseman and excise free,
In Conestogas drawn by four
He hauled the bree to Baltimore.

*Yearly payments on lands purchased.

Free from the odious whiskey-tax,
For, this repealed, was now nomore;
And "Liberty and No Excise"
Had come by law, free from the vice
Of Tom the Tinker's* lore;
And old Monongahela-bree
Flowed exciseman and excise-free.

Methinks I see the sturdy team
Once more enroute with heavy load
Of flour and whiskey, moving slow—
So slow it scarcely seems to go—
Upon the winding turnpike-road;
Thus, man and beast, to toil inured,
In patient hope the toil endured.

*John Holcroft, leader of the famous Whiskey Insurrection, (1794).

WAGONING.

THERE were two classes of these men,—
Men of renown, not well agreed;
"Militia-men" drove narrow treads,
Four horses and plain red Dutch beds,
And always carried "grub" and feed;
Because they carried feed and "grub"
They bore the brunt of many a "rub."

These were the thrifty farmers' teams
That wagoned, only, now and then;
They made their trips in winter-time;
They trudged along through rime and grime
And hurried through it, back again;
An annual trip, or two, they made,
And drove a sort of coastwise trade.

They gathered up promiscuous loads
Of produce in the neighborhood—
Some whiskey, flour and cloverseeds,
To suit a city dealer's needs,
And always did the best they could,
By hauling these to Baltimore—
Back-loaded for some country-store.

The "Reg'lars" boldly ventured out,
Despising danger, doubt, and fear;
And, like the gallant merchant-ships,
They made their long, continuous trips
All through the seasons of the year:
No matter whether cold or warm—
Through heat and cold, through calm and storm.

I've seen a many a fleet of them
In one, long, upward, winding row;
It ever was a pleasant sight,
As seen from distant mountain-height,
Or quiet valley, far below;
Their snow-white covers looked like sail,
From mountain-height or distant vale.

I see them on their winding way,
As, in the merry olden time
I saw them, with their heavy loads,
Upon the old-time turnpike-roads,
The rugged mountains climb;
Like full-rigged ships they seemed to glide
Along the deep-blue mountain-side.

The "Regulars" were haughty men,
Since *five* or *six* they always drove,
With broad-tread wheels and English[36] beds,
They bore their proud and lofty heads,
And always thought themselves above
The homespun, plain, Militia-men,
Who wagoned only now and then.

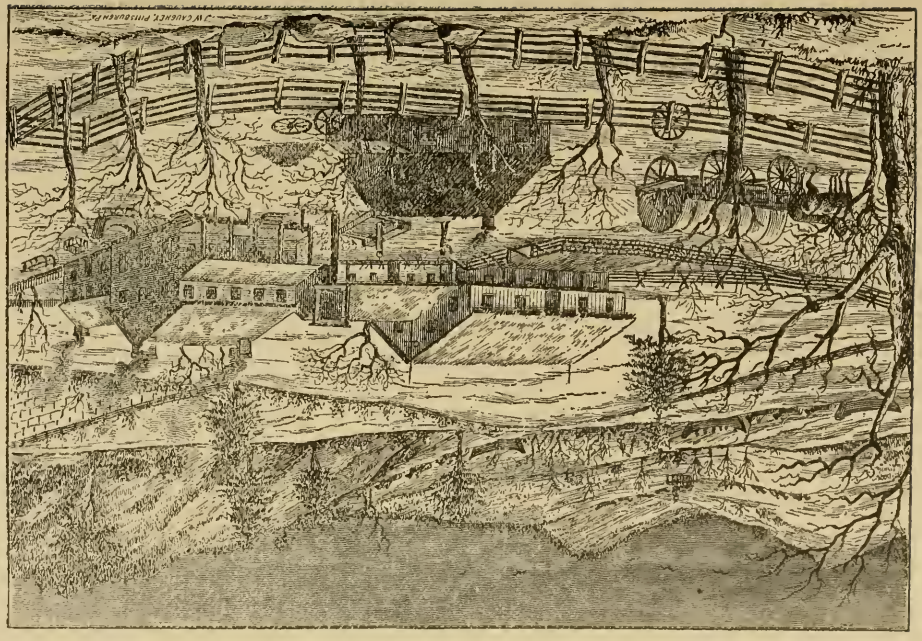
(Who has not seen, who has not felt
The cursed arrogance of *purse!*
E'en in the wagoners of the past,
Was seen the haughtiness of caste,
And felt, the old, old, social curse,
That measures manhood by success
More than by native nobleness.)

So were all goods transported then—
By reg'lar or militia team—
And, though, a slow and toilsome way,
It was the best known in its day—
Before the world had got up steam—
As, now, this steam-dependent world
Is round its business-axle whirled.

I hear the music of the wheels,
Slow moving o'er the frozen snow;
Like distant bugle-notes they sound,
While from the mountain-height's, around,
Or from the dark-green depths below,
Perchance, the music of the bells
The weird, enchanting, echo swells.

I hear the wagoner's hoarse, harsh voice
Still urging on the lab'ring steeds;
I hear the sharp crack of his whip—
I see the horses pull and slip,
Still urged to more herculean deeds—
The while their steaming breath congeals
Like hoar-frost, on the wintry fields.

O'er mountain-heights and valleys deep,
Still, slowly on and on they move,
Along their tedious, rugged, way—
Some eighty furlongs in a day—
Their stalwart strength and faith they prove,
And oft' to their extreme delight,
Some old-time tavern looms to sight.



There, Custom always called a halt,
To water, rest, and take a drink;
And, not unlikely, while they stopped,
A jig was danced, or horses swapped;
And so, perchance, a broken link,
The smith was hurried to renew,
Or tighten up a loosened shoe.

Meantime, the jolly wagoners stood
And swaggered 'round the old-time bar—
The latticed nook, the landlord's throne,
Where he presided, all alone,
And smoked his cheap cigar,
And reckoned up the tippler's bill
For whiskey, at a "fip" a gill;

Or other kinds of old-time drinks,
All full of good and hearty cheer;
As apple-jacks, and peach-brandies
Or cider-oils, or sangarees,
Or, O, the foaming poker'd-beer;
Or apple-toddies, steaming-hot,
Or cherry-bounce—almost forgot.

There never was a rougher set,
Or class of men upon the earth,
Than wagoners of the Reg'lar line—
Nor jollier when in their wine,
Around a blazing bar-room hearth;
How did they fiddle dance and sing?
How did the old-time bar-room ring?

There were few idle fiddles when
Old wag'ners drank their jolly fill
Of beer and cider by the quart,
And wines and gins of every sort,
And whiskey, measured by the gill,
And cherry-bounce and cider-oil,
And bitters spiced with penny-royal.

Sometimes the question—who should treat
Was left to doubtful luck, or chance;
A game of cards at whist, or loo,
Of checkers, chess, or domino;
And after that the hoe-down dance;
Sometimes the question,—who had beat?
Was settled by the landlord's treat.

Around a blazing hearth, at e'en,
Or roaring ten-plate Pinegrove stove,
Those heroes of the turnpike-roads—
Those haulers of the heavy loads,
Or weary drivers of a drove,
Forgathered, many a winter's night
In freedom, fun, and fond delight.

They sat in all the different ways
That men could sit, or ever sat;
They told of all their jolly days,
And spat in all the different ways
That men could spit, or ever spat;
They talked of horses and their strength,
And spun their yarns at endless length.

Sometimes they raffled for the stakes,
And sometimes shot therefor at mark;
A many a foolish wager laid,
And many a reckless swap was made—
Of horses—traded in the dark;
Sometimes disputes ran wild and high,
To bloody nose or blacken'd eye.

All such disputes were ended quick
By an appeal to harden'd fists;
These were the courts of last resort,
That settled pleas of every sort
That came upon the wagoners' lists;
No other forum, then, was sought,
When *the* decisive fight was fought.

Ten wagoners in a bar-room,—well,
Say, twenty feet by scant sixteen;
A ten-plate stove, that weighed a ton,
Stood in a wooden-box-spittoon—
Which was, of course, not very clean—
'Mid clouds of cheap tobacco-smoke,
Thick, dark, and strong enough to choke.

Huge benches and some pond'rous chairs—
Such as the world nomore may see;
An ample pile of hickory logs,
An old tom-cat and several dogs,
And playful pups—some two or three—
All 'round one stove or bar-room fire!
A scene an artist might admire.

And, superadded to all these
Were unwashed feet and shoes and boots,
And boot-jacks, slippers, tallow-dips,
And some great-coats and Loudon whips
And heaps of wagoners' oversuits;
While currying-shirts and overalls
Embellished the surrounding walls.

But O, the kitchen of an inn—
That heaven on earth in days of yore!
The pots and pans and ovens—dutch,
The home-baked bread we loved so much—
The want of which we now deplore,
While vainly seeking nutriment
In alka*lies* for aliment.

There, buxom lasses and their beaus,
On winter-nights, in olden-times,
In freedom sang their merry songs,
And on the shovel, with the tongs,
Rang out the rude and rustic chimes;
While on the pond'rous iron crane
Hung pot-rack, hook, and dusky chain:

There, in their homespun woolen gowns,
When daily labors were well o'er,
The lasses used to sing and sew,
Or trip the light fantastic toe
Upon the burnished kitchen-floor;
And, though around a kitchen-hearth,
The most enchanting place on earth.

How many a troth was plighted there—
How many a happy match was made?
How many a legend there was said
By tongues and lips long cold and dead!
How many a roguish trick was played
Upon some happy bride and groom
By hands long mouldering in the tomb?

Where are those kitchens of the past—
Those rugged chimneys built of stone?
Where is the pitchy fagot's blaze,
Which, like the Borealis-rays,
From out the chimney-corner shone?
Like those who danced and frolicked there,
They're numbered with the things that were.

The fragrance of their memory hangs
And lingers 'round us like the air;
They haunt us in our waking dreams,
And, often, in our sleep, it seems
As if again, we saw them, there;
But stern realities arise
While moisture gathers in our eyes.

STAGING AND STYLES.

THE great high-ways of other days,
Alas, are traveled, now, nomore,
By teams and coaches, chaise, and sleighs,
A'horse, a'foot, and other ways,
As in those days of yore.

No swinging, bounding, crowded stage
Comes rumbling, gayly, o'er the hills;
No more, at night, or noon, or morn,
The old-time post-man's winding horn,
The vale with echoes fills.

With what conceit the driver sat,
All self-important, throned on high!
With quiv'ring reins, all well in hand,
With flourished whip and stern command,
And keen, discerning eye.

Great, as some would-be governor—
Of all that fairly appertained
To that old-time establishment,
The famous stage-line, "Good Intent"—
For, so *that* line was named.

Ye coaches of ye olden-time!
And will they never come again?
Coach and contents in antique style
Would make a modern stoic smile
To see what styles were, then.

Styles hither brought from Fatherlands,
Beyond the waters deep and blue:
The camlet cloak, the overalls,
The plaited pants with narrow falls,
The silver-buckled shoe.

Of such substantial styles of dress
We modern weaklings never knew;
The bell-crowned hat, the red-topp'd boot,
The buckram-collar'd brown surtout,
The powder'd wig and cue;

Blue, spike-tail coats with buttons gilt,
Black satin, or, buff-colered vest,
Stiff, bristled stock, four inches high,
Shirt-collar, up to ear and eye—
Long locks and tow'ring crest.

The linen shirt with ruffled breast,
Pure as the fresh-blown snow-white rose;
The tasseled glove upon the hand,
The diamond pin, the snff-box and
The fancy, silken hose;

And dangling from the plaited fob,
A ribbon or a costly chain
Of silver, gold, or polished steel,
With glittering slides and massive seal,
And then the tasseled cane

Of hickory or Kentucky ash—
For Jackson, or, for Henry Clay—
With buck-horn top and silver band,
Lent grace and beauty to the hand,
And even would, to-day.

Yᴱ MEN OF Yᴱ OLDEN-TIME.

The farmer is a monarch,
A hillock is his throne,
The sun above him shining,—
Is his heavy, golden, crown.

Flocks at his feet are lying,
Soft flatterers, streaked with red,
The calves are cavaliers,
Who strut with haughty head,
—Heine.

IN all their dealings, how exact,
And honest to the very cent!
No false pretence, no sharp deceits,
No pious frauds, no learned cheats—
Just what a bargain meant,
Without resort to hook or flaw,
Was kept without resort to law.

They took each other by their word,
And oxen they took by the horn;
Like honest men, they spoke the truth,
Not forcedly, because, forsooth,
To speak it they were sworn;
Nor was there aught they so despised
As men of tricks and frauds and lies.

To sue each other at the law,
Our rural sires were ever slow;
There were few petty lawsuits then—
Except 'twixt two litigious men—
John Doe and Richard Roe;*
The parties have been changed, somehow—
It's "Fetrow *versus* Fetrow," now.

*i. e. Brother against brother.

The old-time rural gentleman
Was more on home-enjoyments bent;
The even tenor of his way
Through all the labors of the day
He kept and was content',—
Unenvious of a city-life,
With all its hazards, noise, and strife.

He took no wild nor reckless risks
In fancy stocks, nor pools, nor shares;
His honest income, though but small,
To him, in truth, was more than all
The wealth of millionaires—
Perhaps by doubtful means acquired
And spent in splendid state, retired.

To him, a farm was happiness,
And owned and paid for, it was bliss;
In health and peace and honest toil
He turned and turned the rugged soil,
But well assured of this—
That rural life, though rough and hard,
Brings, in the end, the best reward.

His wife, the idol of his heart,
And partner of his daily cares;
His children, disciplined and trained,
From immorality restrained,
And schooled in home-affairs;
Like plants grown up in youth and grace,
Or polished palace-stones in place.

His garners filled with rural store,
His cribs distent with heaps of corn;
His flocks and herds in barn and field
Brought forth for him a gen'rous yield,
And when his flocks were shorn
Beneath the spreading homestead-tree,
The lambkins gamboled in their glee.

And on the airy homestead-porch,
On many a quiet summer's-eve'
When cares had ceased and work was done,
He sat and watched the setting sun
His parting glories leave
Upon the fields and on the sky,
But soon to fade away and die.

Those worthies of the olden time
Were truly social and polite:
It was a pleasant sight to see
Them in a merry company;
And for the eternal right
They'd fight, e'en as their sires had done
At Concord and at Lexington.

Old vet'rans of our two great wars
Still bravely lived and lingered long;
They felt it was a glorious thing
To tell their stories o'er or sing
A patriotic song—
The younger folks to entertain
And fight their battles o'er again.

They loved to talk of WASHINGTON—
His virtues and his noble deeds
In war and peace; and whose renown,
More brilliant than a royal crown,
No panegyric needs—
Whose bright example will outlive
All honors titled names could give.

Although they boasted, much, the blood
And name of Anglo-Saxon,
They bantered and defied John Bull,
Denounced and cursed the coward, Hull,
And swore by Andrew Jackson—
The hero of the bloody scenes
Of Horse-Shoe Bend and New Orleans.

The "Conqueror of the Conquerors
Of Bonaparte," they proudly said—
Who fought behind the cotton-bags,
While Pakenham, who made his brags,
Lay bleeding with the dead;
And Lambert, Thornton, Gibbs, and Keane
Were flying o'er the heaps of slain.

The eighth of January was
A grand and glorious holiday;—
The troops turned out, the cannon roared
In every town; and then, aboard
The ships, a grand display—
From every mast the stripes and stars
Waved proudly o'er the jolly tars.

They sneered and jeered at Pakenham
And all his boasts and promis'd booty,
When he should capture New Orleans,
With all that lawless "booty" means—
Inviolable "beauty"—
And then, hur-r-a-h! hur-r-a-h! hur-r-a-h!!
For Jackson, Coffee,—Martial law!

And then, they sang about a swamp
Whose ground was low and mucky—
"He led them down to Cypress Swamp—
The ground was low and mucky—
There stood John Bull in martial pomp
But here was Old Kentucky!
O, Kentucky! the hunters of Kentucky!
There stood John Bull in martial pomp
But here was Old Kentucky,"[37]

'Twere hard to tell of half the songs
They sang of glorious victories;—
The "right of search" had been denied,
And Yankee ships had hurt the pride
Of England on the seas;
The war-cry of a hundred fights
Had been "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights!"

And Yankee Doodle was the tune
Our famous fathers gloried in;
They sang it in their daily life,
They stepped it off to drum and fife
And to the violin—
Danced Fisher's Hornpipe, and, supreme
Of merry tunes, the Devil's Dream.

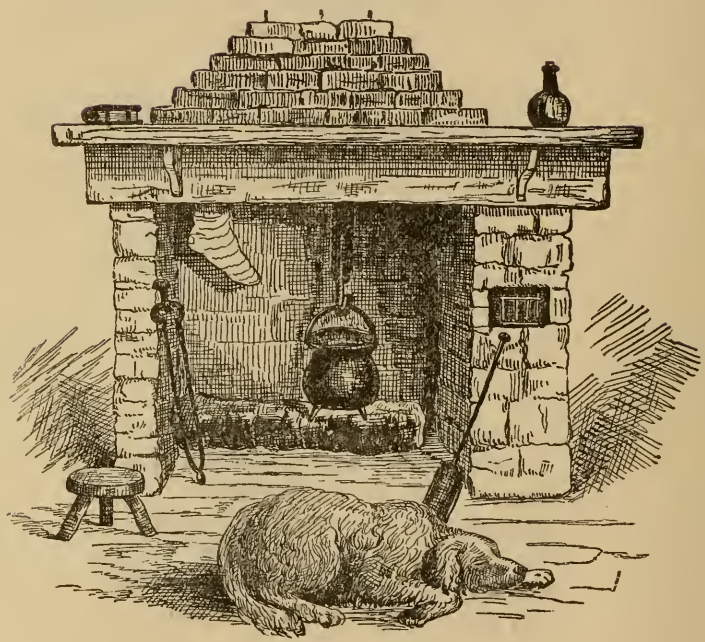
Where are the men of olden times—
The Websters, Jacksons, Bentons, Clays?
The *statesmen*, fearless, honest, true,
Who knew the right and dared to *do*,
And well deserved the praise—
When Honesty frowned down vile stealth
And *brains* were more esteemed than *wealth*.

Gone with the old and better days
For which, though vain, we sometimes sigh;
Their stately forms, though lying low,
A chaplet wreathes each lofty brow
In marbled memory;
How strange—not e'en our Washington—
Nor one of these, should leave a son!
Perhaps, as well, for who can tell?
No son on whom his mantle fell.

Still, there are men and women whom,
We honor, love, revere, and prize;
Fathers who bear a noble fame—
Mothers who well deserve the name,
And all that name implies;
For sake of these, who never swerved,
Our social fabric stands preserved.

God grant such men and women may,
As if, perennially, endure—
Like springs from some superior clime,
Flow on until the end of time,
Keeping life's fountains pure,
And purifying as the flow,
'Till earth their worth shall feel and know.

From the *malaria* of our times—
The real, *social*, "Yellow Jack"—
The raging mania for wealth—
The canker at the *moral* health,
And the immortal quack
In church and state, notorious—
From these, good Lord, deliver us!



Yᴱ WOMAN OF Yᴱ OLDEN TIME.

All honor to woman, to her it is given
To garden the earth with the roses of heaven
All blessed, she linketh the loves in their choir,
In the veil of the graces her beauty concealing
She tends on each altar that's hallowed by feeling,
And keeps ever living the fire.
—SCHILLER.

O, for an artist-poet, now,
A Raphael or an Angelo—
For *some* immortal artist-saint,
Who could for us divinely paint
In radiance of celestial climes,
The female charms of olden times.

Come, gentle Muse, sustain me, then,
Inspire my thoughts and guide my pen—
A pen plucked from thy airy wing—
Teach me in less rude lays to sing
The grateful praise that should be sung
By some divine, angelic, tongue.

Perhaps, I wisely should decline
A task I cannot claim as mine;
For, O, the unaffected grace
And goodness in the heart and face
Of her who was divinely given
To earth, that earth might be like heaven.

No empty show, no false pretence—
Hers was the wealth of common sense;
The graduate of Wisdom's school,
She never played the *learned* fool;
Though ignorant of arts and airs,
Yet wise in noble works and cares.

Thus, strong in virtue, goodness, truth,—
True earnests of immortal youth—
She moved in her appointed sphere,
The peeress of her liege and peer;
At once a blessing and the blest—
Of Heaven's gifts to man the best.

In all life's varied, weary rounds,
Her love and patience knew no bounds;
At morn, at noon, or, evening late,
'Twas hers "to labor and to wait;"
What e'er in doubt, yet this was sure—
'Twas hers to suffer and endure;
When suff'ring most,—woe worth the while—
A heavenly beam illum'ed her smile.

As Wife, 'twas hers to love and cheer,
And oft' alas! to sigh and bear;
As Mother, wisely to command
And rule her house with righteous hand;
When she reproved, or e'en chastised,
It was but love in pain disguised.

In sickness, hers to watch and pray—
In ministrations, night and day,
Apply the homely healing balm,
The suff'rer's rising fears to calm;
All these, the while, with sleepless eye,
She sang the soothing lullaby.

Methinks I see—yea, even now,—
One hand upon the aching brow,
And in her arm, in fond embrace,
A nursing child she holds in place;
While to her foot the cradle swings
And times the tune she softly sings.

I feel her hand upon my head,
As, at her knee, my prayers were said;
There many a holy truth was learned,
While in my heart the precept burned,
And many a pious lesson given
That points me, still, the way to heaven.

Good angel of the homestead hearth—
She taught her children from their birth,
By precept, practice, prayer, and song,
To love the right and hate the wrong;
And who, save Heaven above us knows
How much the world her influence owes?

Like her of whom King Lemuel sung—
O, had his harp ne'er silent hung—
Though silent, now, two thousand years,
It still vibrates in mortal ears,
And wakes to life in rustic lays,
Of Lemuel's song, this paraphrase.

Her wealth of worth so far exceeds
The ruby's price, no spoil she needs;
In confidence her husband's heart
Trusts safely in her, as a chart,
And all through life her womanhood
Loves, blesses him, and does him good.

She well considers all her ways,
In works of love she spends her days;
And with the fruits of her own toil
She buys a field of orient soil;
She plants a thriving vineyard there
And wisely manages with care;
With health and strength her loins are girt,
Her hands in handy-work expert.

She strengtheneth her arms with toil,
Nor fears the fleck of labor's moil;
With joy and gladness she perceives
The rich reward her toil receives—
The goodness of her merchandise
Alone, worth more then golden prize;
Like merchant ship, brings food from far—
Fair regions of the morning-star.

To noble works and labors schooled,
Her house and household wisely ruled;
Her candle went not out by night,
But star-like shone its cheerful light;
She was the royal rural queen
Who graced and blessed the rural scene,
While cheerful song and homestead lore
Kept evil from the homestead-door.

She was to spindle, distaff, and
To loom not slow to lay her hand;
She stretched it forth unto the poor,
Nor turned the needy from her door,
Blest in the thought that her reward
In this, was lending to the Lord.

Nor was she of the snow afraid—
Thick garments of fine wool she made—
Her house against the winter's cold
She clothed in scarlet-double-fold;*
Her couches and her floor and bed
With richest tapestry coverings spread,
While in the silk and purple made
By her own hands, she was arrayed.

Her face with goodness gleamed and glowed,
Her mouth with wisdom overflowed;
And like the rich, ripe clusters hung,
The law of kindness in her tongue;
Her words were ever chaste and pure,
Her vows, her pledge, and promise sure;
(And these a woman more adorn
Than all the silks and purple worn.)

*The Hebrew meaning of the word scarlet—double.

She looketh well to all the ways
Of her own household, and the praise
Of husband and of children, too,
Are giv'n as grateful as the dew;
And, as they all before her rise,
Extol her virtues to the skies.

Happy the man of such a wife—
He needs no better boon for life,
Nor honor, though in courts and states
He's known; and in the royal gates;
Nor needs he any higher bliss,
For, bliss and honor, such as this,
Is that which crowns Creation's plan—
A WOMAN to helpmeet the Man.

All honor be, from age to age,
To such a noble parentage;
Its virtues, simple, yet, sublime,
Still brighten with the lapse of time;
Let coming generations claim
The glories of th' ancestral name.

THE SCHOOL.

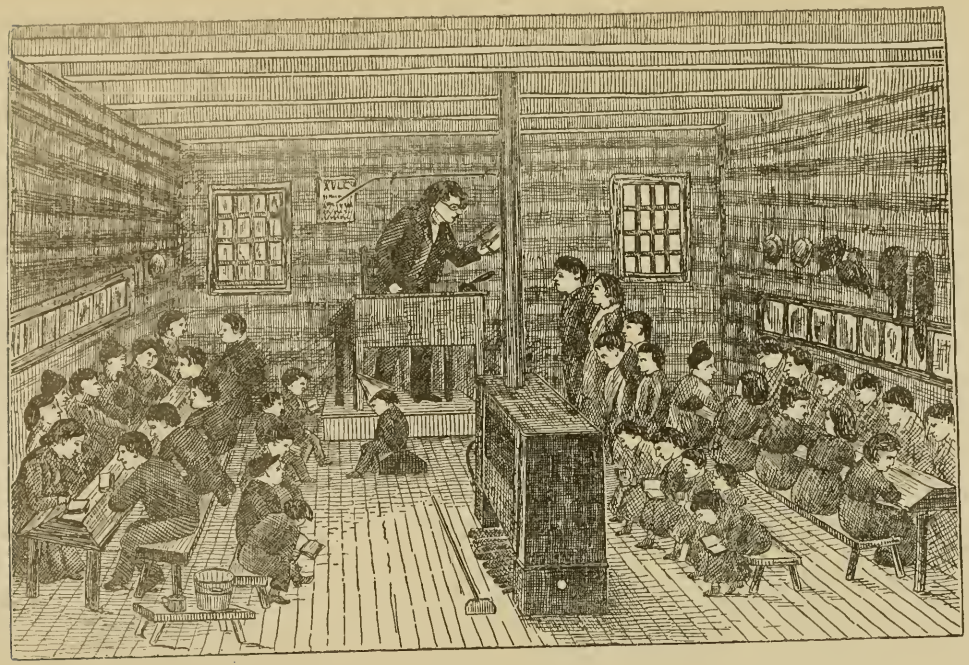
Ah! luckless wight, who cannot then repeat
"Corduroy Colloquy," or "Ki, Kae, Kod,"—
Full soon his tears shall make his turfy seat
More sodden, though already made of sod,
For Dan shall whip him with the word of God,—
Severe by rule and not by nature mild,
He never spoils the child and spares the rod,
But spoils the rod and never spares the child,
And soe, with holy rule deems he is reconciled.
—Hood.

'TWERE sweet to turn dull thought from other themes
And seek the favor of the gentle Muse
That loves to linger 'round Apollo's shrine,
Where Learning's richer, rarer beauties shine—
Where lovely Leto's luring shade still woos
The weary votaries of the classic Nine
And teaches them the nobler art divine.

Come then, thou mother of the Muse's god—
Most highly favored, of the mystic isle*—
Thou siren of the weird, the Delphian glen,
Inspire my song and guide my rustic pen;
On these, my rude, unclassic numbers smile—
O, lead me to the pure Pierian spring!
Teach me the old-time rural school to sing.

I seek, again, the shelter of that lowly roof—
To lift the latch of that rude, oaken door—
Portal of the rustic temple, as it stood
Beside, or in the gently waving wood;
But ah! alas! I find it there nomore;
And yet I see it in that sylvan nook,
As when it lured me with my first new book.

*Delos.



"Oh, for the lessons learned by heart!
Aye, though the very birches smart
  Should mark those hours again;
I'd 'kiss the rod' and be resigned
Beneath the stroke, and even find
  Some sugar in the cane!"

No graceful Grecian order reigned without,
(Though Irish order always reigned within,)
No polished marble from the Parian pile,
No granite from the wondrous, floating isle[38]
Of wondrous, mythologic origin;
Yet, did the Muses, even, deign to dwell
In that unclassic, western forest dell.

Yea, e'en, as in the mythologic times,
In weird, Castalian, classic shades,
Or, in the ever verdant-laureled nooks,
Beside the ever-murmuring, sparkling brooks,
Or in the sunny, fairy-haunted glades,
They kindled, oft' the pure, poetic flame,
And softly whispered fair Latona's name.

E'en so, in Pennsylvania's shady groves
Of sturdy oaks and elms and tow'ring pines,
Where gentle Learning finds her humblest seat,
There may the sons of rustic song retreat,
And there, 'though in the rudest homespun lines,
May sing, as careless of both name and fame,
As any bird that ever singing came.

Yea, where the near-forgotten school-house stood,
With clapboard roof, all weather-worn and gray—
That temple of the Irish pedagogues—
Of roughly hewn, or, likely, unhewn logs;
There, in some modern, rural, Cloven way,
(As in the old, the Delphian temple stood)
Or, all embowered in the fragrant wood.

There, in that log-built temple, gray and old,
I see, again, the old-time country-school;
The healthy children from the neighb'ring farms,
Bright-eyed and blushing, full of native charms;
And in their midst, upon a three-legg'd stool
Enthroned the "Master," in whose imperial looks,
They read the frowning mandate, "*Mind your books!*"

Nor idle eye was seen, or whisper heard—
All understood the frown, the squint, the nod;
Short was the warning, and the rigid rule
He had—"the idle fool gets whipt at school!"
And O, the terror of old "Horny's" rod,
When fast and furious he laid it on
Some lazy Jake, or tricky Jim, or John.

No monarch's sway was e'er more absolute
Than his of whom, reluctantly, I sing;
As, there, upon his tripod throne he sat,
A fierce, unlimited, stern, autocrat,
More potent than an old Egyptian king,
For, over wards of family, church, and state,
In him all power was, simply, concentrate.

A gloomy shade of patriarchal times—
His only sceptre was the ruling rod;
And, if, in wielding it, he sometimes maimed,
Appeal was useless, since old "Horny" claimed
He had authority, direct, from God—
And proved it, too, by canons of the church—
That Aaron's rod had bloomed and grown to *birch*.

In "Horny's" hands it brought forth ruddy buds,
And, sometimes bloody blossoms, not a few
In spots where he, with most tremendous whack,
Had laid it on some poor, devoted back—
Or stripes—imperial purple,—black and blue;
For this he had the proverb, false, but mild—
That "he who spares the rod will spoil the child."

Such was the high commission, be it known,
By which the Irish Master claimed to rule—
Authority direct from Him, above,
To flog at will, but all for good and love;
Yet, to the helpless boy or girl, at school,
It must, indeed, have often seemed to be
More Sinai than drops from Calvary.

No visitation e'er disturbed
The pedagogic monarch, absolute;
By custom it was his, forget it not—
To rear and guide the blessed, "tender thought,"
And "teach the young idea how to shoot"—
To read and write, and, sometimes, do a sum—
Which was, about, the whole curriculum.

So narrow was the range of learning, then,
And yet, therewith, all happy and content';
Those *lower branches*, too, were high enough
For simple rustics and Sir John McDuff;
And learning, then, was less for ornament,
Yet, simple as it was, of far more use
Than heads cramm'd full of learning, more abstruse.

And, now, I see the rude old writing-desks,
And, aye, the benches, even, ruder still;
The length'ning rows of rustic girls and boys,
All redolent of health and youthful joys;
The Master, busy with his old goose-quill,
And, in the midst, I see that old-time stove
That bore the legendary name, "Pine Grove."

In those uncultivated olden times,—
Who ever thought of school-room ventilation—
Of what was breathed, or, heard of hygienne?
Of sweet ozone, or healthful oxygen?
Regard for truth demands the observation—
The health of rustics in the school-room, then,
Despite much sulphuretted hydrogen!

The same was true of homestead room or kitchen,
That breathed through stove, or open chimney-flue;
These were the three-fold, blessed, homely fires—
They warmed, they cheered, and were the purifyers
That cost so little, yet to health more true
Than all improvements on the rude old ways
We—*suffer* from in these enlight'n'd days.

I see the dunce upon the sharp-edged block,
With labeled dunce-cap on his dullard head;
And, in a corner of the dingy room,
Behind the door, an old-time hickory broom,
On which, the oracle of that temple said,
No wicked witch could ever mount or ride,
Unless she sat that hickory broom astride.

How oft' upon a cold—a wintry morn'—
I saw the rustics coming, cheeks aglow,
As, one by one, they softly passed the door,
And then, the morning salutations o'er—
The girls, with nimble curtesies, drooping low—
Then, quickly, round upon the rugged walls
Hung hats and bonnets, cloaks, and coats and shawls.

And on a rude old oaken table, there,
Or wooden pins drove in the wooden wall,
Were well-filled dinner-baskets by the score,
With luscious lunch enough, and often more
Than just enough to satisfy them all;
And then, O, then, the joys that ever came
With lunch-time and with noon-day merry game!

The ruling school-day game was corner-ball—
A favorite one among the larger boys;
Methinks I hear, again, th' exultant shout—
"I hit you fair, I'm in, and you are out!"
Methinks I hear, again, the louder noise—
Perhaps, the merriest ever heard on earth—
Of overflowing, rural, school-day mirth.

Methinks I see the fairy castle rise
From out the drifts of fleecy, virgin snow;
Or, smaller girls and boys at playing ring,
And, as around they march, I hear them sing
As I did more than fifty year ago—
And can it be, it is so long, so long,
Since there I joined that play and simple song!

How many a tender link was forged and formed
For youthful lovers' bright, and golden chain!
How many a tiny seed, at random sown,
Has sprung and to a joyous harvest grown!
And, surely, I should labor all in vain
To try to tell of half the wondrous things
That had their germ in merry school-day rings.

'Tis sweet to win, no matter how, one's laurels,
By blood or ink; 'tis sweet to put an end
To strife; 'tis sometimes sweet to have our quarrels
Particularly with a tiresome friend:
Sweet is old wine in bottles, ale in barrels;
Dear is the helpless creature we defend
Against the world; and dear the school-boy-spot
We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.

—Byron.

WHIPPING THE CAT.

THE cobbler, tailor, *and* pedagogue,
In old-times used to whip the cat;[39]
But, many a youth of later day
Might readily exclaim and say,
"What wanton cruelty was that?"
Or else, "what metaphors are these—
What legends and what mysteries?"

Well, then, "To whom it may concern"—
Let him from these same "presents" learn,
That, just as sure as winter came,
There came therewith, those worthies three—
Itinerants, from house to house,
In quest of sausage, souse, and schmouse,
Cider and schnapps and sangaree;
For, every farmer had a job
For "stitchlouse," pedagogue, or "snob."

I used to love to sit and watch
The cobbler's cut and tailor's stitch;
To hear the learned arguments
Between those learned disputants,
Concerning elf, and ghost, and witch,
And whether they were black, or white,
Or, oxen talked on Christmas-night.[40]

Sometimes the sharp discussion turned
On questions touching church, or state;
Sometimes, revivals were the theme;
Sometimes, a vision, or, a dream,
A swine's, a buck's, or, bullock's weight—
How much he weighed, or, would he weigh—
They'd bet and lose, but never pay.

The cobbler said the "thrash'"-machine
Would take the *poor* man's bread away;
But, said the knight of the ferule,
'Twould be a useful thing in school,
And prophesyed we'd see the day—
Though now, quite doubtful it might seem—
When "thrashing" would be done by steam!

On schools, their views were more akin—
Free schools they thought "of little use,"
And knights of scissors, goose, and last,
Their ripe opinions freely passed—
Adverse to "children running loose;"
While *he*, brave knight of quill and stool,
"Would *die* for the subscription-school!"

On temperance they were more agreed,
Perhaps, than anything beside;
And, I am sure I heard them say
They'd never sign their rights away—
For which their fathers bled and died;
Then pledged themselves in th' barleybree,
That Uncle Sam's should ever be
"The home o' the brave, and the land o' the free."

On earthquakes, meteors, and the like,
Their theories were no less sound;
One said those noises under ground
Were caused by loose rocks rolling 'round,
While Mother Earth was turning 'round;
And falling stars and meteors
Were "Luciferic metaphors."

This theory was the pedagogue's,
But he was only one of three—
The learnéd one, so highly schooled,
By two to one was overruled—
By "goose" and "last," who did agree—
The Earth was flat and *statu quo*
And, so, the thing could not be so.

Of all great questions they discussed,
The tariff was, perhaps, most vexed;
The cobbler fiercely did contend
He paid the *duty in* the *end;*
The tailor,—if he paid at all—
Contended it was on his *awl*;
The cobbler, hastily replied,
"I pay the tariff on the *hide;*"
And, seeing them so much perplex'd
The pedagogue his judgment passed—
That Crispin paid it at the *last.*

The man who made or who consumed—
Which paid the duty in the end?
And, who *should* pay, if pay they must?
And what rates would be fair and just—
Specific, fixed, or *advalorem?*
(This was a time, *pre-*"horizontal,")
All this they could not comprehend;
But, all, at length, *solution* found,
When *usquebagh* came pouring round,
And in a brain-enlightning jorum,
Our trio of contending knights,
Drank "to free trade and sailors' rights."

Methinks I hear them, as of yore,
Their crude and shallow wits display;
The cobbler was an Adams man,
The pedagogue, a Jackson man—
The tailor was for Harry Clay;
In *two* things they could all agree—
Their *usquebagh* and *sangaree.*

I see my father's face, again,
As it was moved to smirk or smile;
The tailor argued *for* a hell,
The cobbler was an infidel—
Or, with the accent in the middle,
It sounded much more like in-*fiddle,*
Which was the pedagogic style—
Indiff'rent, all, to false or true,
Yet, Knox-and-Baxter-blazes-blue,
And, though, infernal recondite,
Believed "whatever is, is right."

The tailor made his artful cuts,
The cobbler pulled and split his hairs,
But what cared boys for their disputes?
Their hopes for their new suits and boots
Engrossed their happy, youthful cares;
The pedagogue, the goose, the last—
Their influence on our lives, how vast!

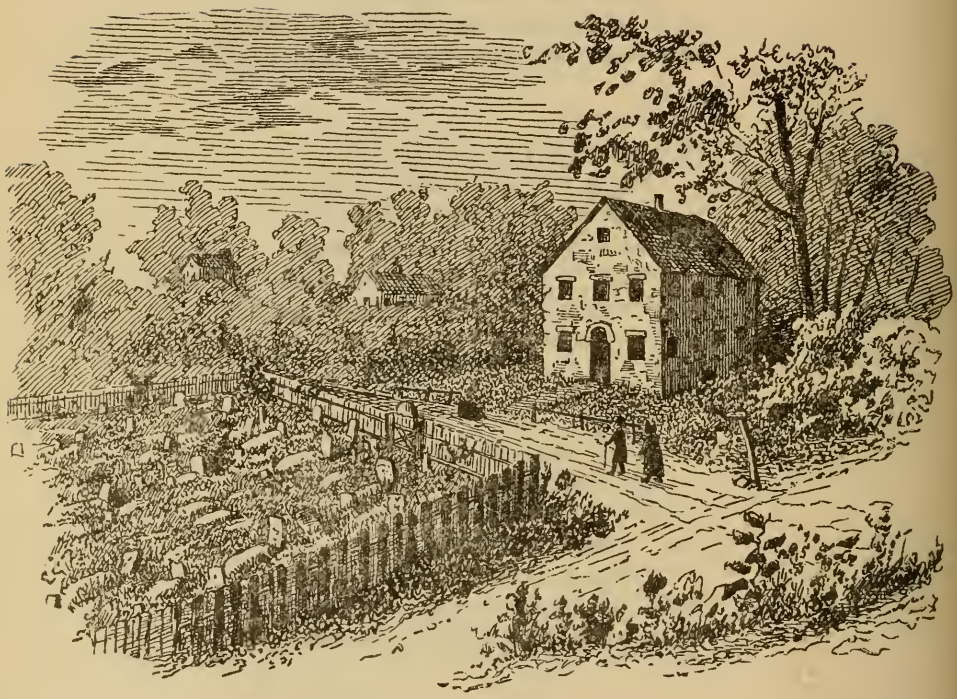
Still less cared I for all these things,
In *my* own, careless, childish glee;
My whirligigs upon the stove—
Those mimic satellites of Jove—
Worth more than all beside to me;
Still less dreamed I the power that whirled,
Was that same power that moves the world.

Or what cared I for pedagogue,
Tailor, or merry cobbler, then?
Yet, why do those long-buried three,
Forever come back in dreams to me,
With "goose" and last and goose-quill pen?
Why does that snow-white quill appear,
As then, above the Master's ear?

'Twas he taught me my A B C—
To count, to spell, to read, and write,
To add, subtract, and multiply,—
And O, how great a boy was I,
When I, at last, could do it right!
His flattering words ring in my ears
More deeply with the flight of years.

I hear old Crispin whistling, now,
And whetting, still, as beating time—
Merry as meadow-lark in June,
Singing some old-time rustic tune
In strains and accents all sublime;
Poor Crispin, now, so long since dead,
Low leans the stone above his head!

He sleeps on yonder hill, somewhere,
Among those mouldy, moss-grown stones;
And so, the knights of goose and quill,
In that lone graveyard on the hill—
Masses of mould'ring flesh and bones;
All, all, are dead and gone to dust—
"Their souls are with the saints, we trust!"



BARRING OUT THE MASTER.

Oft' does my heart indulge the rising thought
Which still receives, unlook'd for and unsought;
My soul to Fancy's fond suggestion yields,
And roams romantic o'er her airy fields;
Scenes of my youth, develop'd, crowd to view,
To which I long have bade a last adieu!
Seats of delight, inspiring youthful themes,
Friends lost to me for aye, except in dreams.
—Byron.

YE gods! with what inspiring hopes
We looked for Merry Christmas, when
With bolts and bars and weapons, stout,
We barred and kept the Master out,[41]
Until he took the old quill-pen,
And with his strong, but trembling hand
Subscribed his name to our demand.[42]

Like sturdy barons of king John—
Or mailed, heroic, feudal knights—
Ready to shed our youthful blood,
We for our Magna Charta stood,
Full-armed to battle for our rights—
Firm, as with hooks of steel, combined,
Until the treaty had been signed.

This solemn treaty and its terms
Would, now-a-days, seem somewhat odd;
It called for apples, cakes, and beer,
Confections, nuts, and other cheer—
But not an inch of rule or rod;
The treaty signed, he raised the siege,
And, once more, we became his liege.

Once in, the silence that prevailed
Was almost painfully profound ;
The conquered man, with angry face
And tangled hair resumed his place,
The while his ill-disguiséd frown
Left victors, one and all, to doubt
The fate of those who barred him out.

I see him standing, quite erect,
With quivering lips, compressed and firm ;
Except a little tinge of scorn,—
A dignity that might adorn
A Prince, an Arnold, or a Sturm ;
His step, his voice, his slightest noise
Startles a score of girls and boys.

Yes, *girls*, for girls were guilty, too,
If girlish guilt there was in this—
To join in that grand, old time sport,
To help the boys to "hold the fort,"
Or, slyly yield the burning kiss,
Which given upon the blush, unseen,
Oft' fired the youthful magazine.

The daily routine moves along,
The morning-hours have worn away ;
The lessons all well learned and said,
The laggards trap and go up head !
And, now, the school's dismissed, for play;
But, still, the usual jolly mood
Is somewhat doubtful and subdued.

The situation is discussed
Among the larger girls and boys,
A casual hitch comes in the game;
The question rises "who's to blame?"
And, thus, their merry Christmas-joys,
Of which they were, of late, so loud,
Already rest beneath a cloud.

The master, who, at times was wont
To join the bigger boys at ball,
Now, sullenly abstained from sport
And kept himself within the "fort"
Soliloquizing o'er it all—
Uutil, in sleep profound, he snored—
"Which is the mightier, pen, or sword?"

I see the copy-books all set
With words and strokes and hooks and crooks;
How brief the sleep, the sport, the play
Of winter's short and sharp school-day!
And then, again the call to books;
The call at which the rustics run—
That ends their game and all their fun.

Promptly they drop their play and fly,
Each, as if eager to be first;
And, now, once more, in breathless haste,
Each hopeful rustic takes his place,
Still, shy and fearful of the worst;
Each anxious to avoid the lurch—
The stinging rule and smarting birch.

Three classes have recited, but,
The big class has, as yet, not spelled;
The afternoon is wearing late,
And, still, uncertain is the fate
Of those who have, so late, rebelled;
Yet, while his Love supports his arms,
The rebel's hardest fate hath charms.

The silence grows still more profound,
As merry Christmas-eve' draws near;
And, now, the soft, sweet, *billetdoux*,
Beneath the desk, concealed from view,
Is passed in trembling and in fear—
Embellished with the carrier-dove—
Rude emblem of the verdant's love.

Again, the Master stands erect,
And, sternly round the room he looks;
He speaks and startles every nerve—
With pedagogical reserve
He now proclaims "put up your books!"
That instant, the command's obeyed,
And books and slates aside are laid.

But Oh! what moments of suspense—
Before he deigns to speak again!
Again upon his three-legged stool,—
The seat of Wisdom, Learning, Rule—
He takes the mighty goose-quill-pen,
And writes; then places it behind his ear,
While every face turns pale with fear.

Again he rises and he speaks
In measured words, profound and slow;
He calls up John and Mary Ann,
And Jake and Susan, Kate, and Dan,
And, there, so paired, all in a row,
Before the pedagogue they stand,
Obedient to his stern command.

All eyes are fixed upon the rod,
And that deep, dark, mysterious face;
And, now, no nomore a doubt remains
But that the penalties and pains,
And all the deep and dark disgrace
Of rule and birch will be their fate,
Instead of holidays and treat.

But now, behold that face lit up—
Mild as the radiant evening-skies;
He gives the order for the treat!
One almost hears the heart's high beat;
And, ah, the great, the sweet surprise—
Instead of stripes, disgrace, and fear,
Come holidays and cakes and beer.

It chanced, there was a cake-house near
This school of which I sing, of yore—
Old Granny Moyer's stood, unique,
Down by the bridge, across the creek,*
Where wistful urchins oft' conned o'er—
Upon her sign, this legend, queer—
"*Fresh Kaks and Bear for Sail Hear.*"

And on that sign were other things—
Odd illustrations, quite as queer;
Sweet dough in all the shapes it takes;
A corkscrew and some sugar-cakes;
And from a bottle streamed the beer
(The cork was flying in the air)
In effervescence, foaming high,
Into a mug that stood near by.

Her house was built of unhewn logs
And chinked and daubed in olden style;
The roof was all of slabs and boards,
Such as the sawmill-heap affords;
In gable-shed there was a pile
Of stove-wood, sheltered from the rain—
Which, never seemed to wax nor wane.

Ah, well do I recall, e'en now,
That, once, to me, attractive scene;
That house, though humble, rude, and low,
Was always white-washed, white as snow;
And all within was neat and clean;
And on the hearth the wood-fire shone
As bright as hers who fills a throne.

She was a widow, lone and lorn,
With wrinkled brow, but cheerful eye:
She and the house are, long since, gone—
The bridge still stands, the stream flows on,
But I know not the how, nor why,
That queer old legend on hér sign
Should call me back to days lang syne.

*The Conococheague.

But, as, in later years of life—
In search of youthful scenes, together
With an old friend, I passed the spot
Where, once, I knew that rustic cot,
I pondered and I wondered whether,
If granny 's selling cakes in heaven,
For six she, still, is giving *seven*.[43]

But, to my tale—the six were sent
A tripping down the turn-pike road—
Just half a mile beyond the ridge,
To that old cottage near the bridge,
To get the precious Christmas-load,
And hasten back, fast as they could,
To that old school-house in the wood.

Meanwhile, by Master and the school,
A joyful Christmas-hymn is sung;
While those the precious burdens bring,
These with the Master join and sing
With heart and soul and lips and tongue;
And, though the anthem faintly rise,
'Twill find an echo in the skies.

How brief the absence, swift the steps,—
How speedily the six return!
The errand o'er the crystal snow,
Has set their faces in a glow—
Their youthful cheeks with blushes burn;
And as they set their baskets down,
A joyous hum goes round and round.

The prospect of the bounteous feast
Makes many a light and merry heart;
And now the desks like decks are cleared
For action, and the gifts are shared—
To each a lib'ral well-mixed part;
And ah, what wealth of happiness!
No poet's numbers can express.

There were the candies, white and red,
Molasses baked in sticks and bars;
There was the old-time ginger-cake,
As light and fleecy as a flake,
Illuminate' with moons and stars,
And O! the world of secret bliss
That lurked within the sugar-kiss!

There was the old-time barleybree,*
All innocent of filthy drugs;
Brewed from the brown domestic crop
And flavored with the fragrant hop,
And foaming in the pewter mugs;—
What would the school directors say
To such intemperance now-a-day?

Now, all are served, but e're they part,
They join in joyous song again;"
Louder and stronger than before,
Their hearts in gratitude they pour,
And this is now the loud refrain;
"The Savior born in Bethlehem
Brings peace on earth, good will to men."

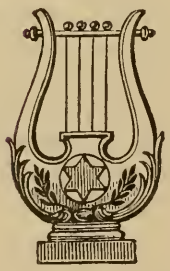
And now, the old-time school's dismissed
For six, long Christmas holidays;
Nor ever was there merrier shout,
Than when the old-time school was out,
Just as the soft, the golden rays
Of evening shot athwart the plain
And fired the homestead window-pane.

E'en as the rays reflected, there—
So bright, and yet, alas, so brief,
Oft' have we seen the youthful face,
All loveliness, a little space,
And then, e'en as the autumn leaf,
Or glow upon the evening sky,
Decline and fade, decay, and die.

*Strong beer.

Where are those merry girls and boys—
Our schoolmates, once so gay and fair?
In vain do we return and call,
And seek, and ask, "where are they all?"
When *echo* sadly answers, "where?"
When echo answers echo's call—
"Where are they all? where are they all?"

Yet, do the spirits of the dead,
In dreams come back to us again;
And how fond memory apprehends
The forms and features of our friends,
And fondly struggles to retain
The fleeting images that come
Like long departed wand'rers home!



A DREAM.

I would recall a vision which I dreamed,
Perchance in sleep—for, in itself, a thought,
A slumbering thought, is capable of years,
And curdles a long life into an hour.
—Byron.

AROUND that graveyard on the hill
Some pleasing memories linger, still:
And once, when, in more recent years,
I lingered there, in sighs and tears,
My curious thoughts refused to stay
Above those mouldering mounds of clay,
But penetrated far beneath,
To mouldering bones and scattered teeth;
To sightless sockets filled with dust,
And nails and screws devoured by rust;
To mortal, once well-dressed and proud,
Now slumbering in a muslin shroud;
To ears, to silence doomed, profound,
'Till Gabriel's final trump shall sound.

And all that busy search could find,
Of what those mortals left behind,
To tell of family, age, or birth—
Of virtues, vices,—social worth,—
Was here and there a moss-grown mound,
Or grave-like shape of sunken ground;
At most, two rudely lettered stones
Kept vigil o'er those mouldering bones
Among the blasted clumps of heath,
And o'er the silent tongues beneath.

I've often sought, and sought in vain,
Some legend of the battle-slain—
The name, alas, and but the name,
Of heroes all unknown to fame—
Upon some modern battle-field,
Where no reward to search would yield,
Save, on a many an humble stone,
The sad response, "Unknown," "Unknown."
And, in this rural burying-ground,
My search no better traces found
Of either of those lovers three,
Of cider-oil and sangaree;
And yet, I knew that somewhere there,
Th' immortal trio buried were.

Disheartened in my grave-yard search,
I sought the records of the church—
(Some records of those olden-times,
Concerning which, these rustic rhymes,)
But sought, alas! but to be told,
They were illegible with mould!
Nor could, nor would the sexton say,
Where those three buried heroes lay.

By some mysterious influence led,
I hastened back among the dead;
And on the stones all gray with age,
On many a half obliterate' page,
So dim, I scarce could comprehend,—
I found the name of many a friend—
His age, his death-day, and his birth—
All else long since gone back to earth.

I lingered 'till the sun was low,
And felt I should, but could not go;
I lingered 'till the sun withdrew—
Until the grass was wet with dew;
I lingered 'till the stars appeared—
Until the grave-yard ghosts I feared—
Until I felt a creeping chill;
Yet lingered there, alone, until

I heard the plaintive whippoorwill,
In notes emphatic, sharp, and shrill,
Reëchoing from hill to hill.
The eastern sky lit up, and soon
Appeared the glorious, rising moon
Above the dusky hills, afar,
And dimmed the lustre of each star.

Seized by a strange, oblivious spell,
As, 'thwart the graves the shadows fell,
A something strange came o'er my sight;
It seemed--as—neither day nor night—
I felt the growing of my eyes,
'Till they seemed twice their natural size—
I felt a tingling in my ears—
A horror of increasing fears!
Among three hundred graves alone!
I sometimes thought I saw my own!
I saw in every grave-yard post
A gaping, grinning, grave-yard-ghost!!
Now, suddenly, a vigorous breeze
Swept through the branches of the trees
In that wild, weird, adjoining wood,
Where many an ancient monarch stood—
Where mingling, moving, shades and lights
Mimicked a host of ghostly knights,
All mounted, armed and groomed and plumed,
Grotesquely by the moon illumed,
And, as their steeds moved to and fro,
Each rider turned as white as snow;
Until, upon each snow-white horse,
Astride, there sat a snow-white corpse!
I heard, at intervals, a moan,—
A something like a dying groan;
Again, at intervals, it seemed
As though a hundred owlets screamed;
Still, lingering, I stood spell-bound,
With elves and ghosts and ghouls around,
Ten thousand insects chirped and trilled—
What wonder that my blood was chilled?

Spell-bound, I saw, or seemed to see,
The shadowy ghosts of those same three;

Nearer, and yet more near they came,
I could not err—they were the same—
The tailor, with lap-board and goose,
For which, alas! no further use;
The cobbler, with his awl and last—
Quaint relics of the buried past;
The pedagogue, as ever, queer,
With snow-white quill above his ear;
Was it, indeed, that same old quill,
With which he wrote my Father's will?—
Which, as we stood with bated breath—
While he recorded Mother's death?
With which, (of course, while still on earth)—
He registered each family birth.
With which, but for the want of breath,
He would have registered my death.
And, with that same, terrific rod,
And that same, stern-commanding nod;
Armed with that same well-worn ferule
With which he lamm'd the boys at school.
And by his side, the dunce-block stood—
A sharp-edged butt of hickory wood;
To dunce and dullard—woful wedge,
Forever threat'ning, upturned edge.

So, there, I saw the Master stand,
With open book in his left hand;
He gave me certain words to spell—
But what they were I cannot tell—
Save one, that badly broke my jaw,
And that was "Mich-il-i-mac-i-nac."
I told him how my jaw was broke',
But not a kindly word he spoke.
He told me I was *bound* to spell—
And this with pedagogic yell.
Spell-bound, I stood and tried to spell,
Until my jaw began to swell;
When, suddenly, the scene was changed!
Behold a school-house, just arranged,
As in the merry olden time,
When John McDuff was in his prime;
For, there he sat upon his stool
Enthroned, as in the old-time school,

Behind his desk, with birch and rule,
And with that birch, tough and acute,
"Taught the young idea how to shoot."

There, many an old familiar face,
I saw again, as then, in place;
With bowéd heads and studious looks
All bending o'er the slates and books.

(I saw John Rogers' Primer there,
And thought I saw the lurid glare[45]
Of flames around him at the stake,
Where he expired for conscience sake:
Nine children standing 'round distressed,
And one at that poor mother's breast.)

They read the Bible through and through—
The Testament and Paslter, too;
From Webster and from Cobb, as well,
The rustic urchins learned to spell;
And in their home-made copy-books,
Were rows of strokes and hooks and crooks;
With diligence and faithfulness,
Some worked their way through Pike and Jess:
Some rules there were, hard on the brain—
Square Root, Cube Root, and Loss and Gain;
And one there was, called Tare and Trett,
That made the youngsters "swear and sweat."

Their hats and caps hung round the walls—
Their dinner-baskets, cloaks, and shawls;
And in the midst that same old stove
That bore the legend of "Pine Grove;"
And in one corner of the room
There stood that same old hickory broom,
On which a witch might mount astride
And up and down the chimney ride;
And true to legend luck, and lore,
A horse-shoe hung above the the door;

And while it hung, 'twas queer that ne'er
A de'il nor witch could enter there.
Against the door, tied to a string
Hung the alternate "Out" or "In."

All these I saw, and many more,
Just as I did in days of yore;
Among old school-mates, once again,
A joyous youth, as I was then;
By some mysterious influence—strange—
I vaguely realized the change.
Through some mysterious influence—kind—
Bright "Youth Land" once again was mine!
O'ercome with joy, I gave a shout,
As in old-time when school was out;
Then came the stern old pedagogue
With ferule, birch and threat'ning nod—
When lo! the barking of a dog
Dissolved the spell, and with a scream
I woke and found it all a dream!

But why the dream, if not because
In sleep we follow Nature's laws?
Why these phantastic scenes, if not
The fruits of overburdened thought?
Our dreams are but the play of powers
That serve us in our waking hours;—
Which, waking, are controlled by will,
But, sleeping, go on working still,
In phantasies that often seem
A something *more* than but a dream.

Oh! I could wish, as did Endymion—
No startling sound had ever broke that spell—
That sleep had been an everlasting one—
That I in "Dream-land" might forever dwell.

The dream but stimulated search,
And soon I visited the church
And grave-yard, there, upon the hill,

And diligently searched until
I found the graves of those same three
Whose graves I sought and longed to see;
And on three rudely lettered stones,
I read, 'twixt sigh and tear and laugh,
On each a curious epitaph:

"Here rest the remains of MASTER MCDUFF,
His ferule was hard and his birch was tough;
O! many the licks and more the pains,—
But this is all that of him remains.

"His soul is gone to that blessed place
Where he sees *his* Master face to face;
And there, if it be the Lord's good will,
May he stay and be an angel still."

"Under this sod and under these stones,
Lieth the body of JUPITER JONES;
He whipt the cat from house to house
And went by the name of the merry stitchhouse."

"Here lieth the body of SHOEMAKER BROWN,—
His soul's gone to the skies;
At *last* old Age, he got him down,
And here, at *last*, he *lies*."

(Besides, as was common in days of yore,
Each headstone this doleful legend bore:)

"O! traveler, stop, as you pass by—
As you are now, so, once was I;
As I am now, so must you be—
Prepare for death and follow me."

THE SINGING-SCHOOL.

"Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

SINCE that high day when Israel sang
Their glorious song of triumph o'er
Proud Pharao and his conquered host,
In gratitude and pious boast—
Safe on the other shore—
The ransomed never ceased to sing
The praises of the Heavenly King.

Theirs was a flood of rhapsodies—
The flowings of the heart—
The inspirations of the hour
Lent more of melody and power
Than all the aids of art;
Theirs was the the song of slaves set free
From tyrants perish'd in the sea.

Song is the voice of heart and soul—
Of Nature's music, most sublime;
Such was that of the Morning stars—
Before the days of sin and wars—
Who sang the birth of Time;
The heralds of creation's dawn—
Of worlds still rolling on, and on:
Sublimer, still, and who that hears,
But God, the music of the spheres.

Let others sing the deeds of war
'Till wars and woes and wastes shall cease;
Let each his chosen tribute bring,
Though rude the lay, still, let me sing
The victories of Peace;
As sung in olden times at yule,
At harvest-home, or singing-school.

In days when winters were more stern
And snows fell deep and came to stay—
Enshrouding grove and grain in ground,
And river, creek, and pond, ice-bound
In crystal'd beauty lay,
As if beneath pure seas of glass,
From Halloween 'till Candlemas.

That same old temple in the wood,
Of which I sang, and sing again—
Which, in our merry youth-land days,
Resounded with the sacred lays
Of rustic lass and swain—
Who sat between, and held the light
At singing-school, a-winter night.

They came from every neighb'ring farm
And hamlet, over hills and dale;
They came in rustic sleds and sleighs—
In Yankee-Jumpers,—old-time ways—
And through the peaceful vale
Reverberated, loud and long,
The joyous laugh and jovial song.

And where, in merry days lang syne,
We took our honors and degrees,
That school of Academus stood,
Surrounded by a stately wood
Of oaks and other trees,
The soft, sweet light of Luna's gleams
Revealed to sight the tether'd teams.

I see the hoar frost on the steeds,
I hear the steeds' impatient neigh;
And, as my Muse the story tells,
I hear the jingle of the bells
On Harvey Allen's gray—
That gray with which he sleighed and won
The hand of Agnes Brotherton.

At times, as chanced the door ajar,
The vocal strains and echoes rang—
Out from within those wooden walls,
And faithful Memory now recalls
An old-time piece they sang—
"Awake my soul in joyful lays
And sing thy great Redeemer's praise!"

Still o'er my spirit old-time tunes
Bear sweet and undiminished sway;
And though no organ piped and thunder'd,
Still, sweeter far was grand "Old Hundred"
When sung the good old way;
And still I hear, as from afar,
The quaint old measures of "Dunbar."

We, truant urchins *would* get in,
In spite of order and denial,
And, in some corner of the house,
Lurk, half-concealed, and play the mouse,
And ape the big bass viol,
Or mimic Master—fork in chime—
Pitching the tune and beating time.

Gay was the "intermission" time,
But, maugre all, it was too short
For introductions, social chats,
Remarks on bonnets, coats, and hats,
And, as a last resort,
The playing of the usual tricks
By interloping Toms and Dicks.

This was the time for pocket-lunch—
On apples, nuts, doughnuts, and cakes,
From pockets and from reticules—
Ever on hand at singing-schools,
And, e'en at country-wakes,
For, even there, they had their pokes
And cracked their nuts and merry jokes.

And every gallant did his best
To ply the lover's winning arts;
And in the well-contested game,
Each ardent, gallant, suitor claimed
He held the ace of hearts;
And hotter, still, the contest grew,
As Cupid's arrows thicker flew.

As we have seen, again we see
The quaint old rural styles of dress,
I liked the girl in green calash,
Heir to a farm and heaps of cash,
But *loved* my bonny "Bess,"
So bright, so beautiful and good,
In her blue riding-gown and hood.

The intermission ended, now,
Again the Master's on his "beat;"
He prompt' resumes his vocal work,
And having toned his turning-fork
Announces "Brattle-street:"
Again all sing with heart and soul,
'Till, heavenward sent, the anthems roll.

"While Thee I seek, protecting Power,
Be my vain wishes stilled,
And may this consecrated hour
With better hopes be filled."

This stanza sung, and now, a pause—
"Mistake!" he says, "let me explain;
Here, my young friends, observe there are,
But *two* beats-measure to the bar;
Now, then, we'll try again;"
Again the tuning-fork goes *ding*,
"Now, all be careful! one, two, sing"—

"In each event of life how clear
Thy ruling hand I see!
Each blessing to my soul most dear
Because conferred by Thee."

"Well done! well done!"—and every face
Grows brighter while it's said;
Approvingly he deigns to smile,
And more approvingly, the while,
He gently bows his head:
Once more he tunes the burnished tine
And says, "we'll close to-night with Rhine."

While leafing o'er to find the place
The light of joy illumes each face,
Then to the task their best they bring,
And, now, in strains sublime they sing,
"Jerusalem my happy home,
Name ever dear to me,
When shall my labors have an end
In joy and peace and Thee!"

'Till one grand piece has not been sung—
For "Zion," now, the ladies call;
He kindly grants their fair request
And, smiling says, "and that's the best—
The very best of all;"
Once more the tuning-fork goes ding,
Once more all voices join and sing;

"O'er the gloomy hills of darkness,
Cheer'd by no celestial ray,
Sun of righteousness, arising,
Bring the bright, the glorious day;
Send the gospel
To me earth's remotest bounds."

"Kingdoms wide, that sit in darkness,
Grant them, Lord, the glorious light,
And from eastern coast to western,
May the morning chase the night,
And redemption
Freely purchased, win the day."

"Fly abroad, thou mighty gospel,
Win and conquer, never cease!
May thy lasting, wide dominions
Multiply and still increase;
Sway thy sceptre,
Savior, all the world around!"

Still, were there more as grand old tunes—
Some seldom, now, or never sung;
Among them Uxbridge, Ward, and Wells,
And Watchman, Wirth, and Evening-Bells,
As e'er moved mortal tongue;
Alas, that it should e'er be said
Much of the soul of song has fled.

And now the singing-school's dismiss'd,
But it is only half-past nine;
The singing-master later lingers,
Then snuffs the light with thumb and fingers,
But moon and stars still shine,
And by the light of Luna's ray
He mounts and rides—unless his horse
By some rude wag was hidd'n away.[46]

O, was there ever merrier time
In days of yore, than, even, this;
When every maiden had a beau,
And Peggy Sparks, sometimes had two,
Rather than go a-miss;
Yet, faded, wrinkled and careworn
She died a maiden, all forlorn.

To see a fair one safely home—
The thought that filled each gallant's mind;
Nor was it thought amiss or trouble,
If his good nag would carry double,
To take her on behind;
If Barney pranced, 'Lenore embraced
John all the tighter round the waist.

Thus, leisurely, they jogged along—
Their cheeks kiss'd red by frosty air;
Nor was it, even, thought amiss,
If slyly she gave John a kiss
By way of paying fare;
Nor was it any ruder thought
If John returned it on the spot.

And some in jumpers, sleighs or sleds
Of various shape or form and size;
On benches 'stride of saplings bent,
As rustic genius might invent,
Or need might improvise,
The merry singers homeward bound
Made hill and dale with mirth resound.

And further we should not, perhaps,
Pursue the singers on their way;
But, come, my ever willing Muse,
To aid me thou wilt not refuse
In this the *finalé*—
The gathering at the way-side inn,
Where they the merry dance begin.

Within those rugged walls of stone,
Again around the blazing hearth,
We see the rustics sit and sip,
With blushing cheek, and rosy lip,
In overflowing mirth;
And there, with fiddle and with bow,
In dusky nook sits fiddling Joe.

Again we see him in his role,
With rosin'd bow and strings well-toned;
Again we see his dusky face—
Dark as the dusky chimney-place
In which he sits enthroned;
And 'eke, behold his twinkling eye,
As "elbow-grease" comes by and by.

And from the landing on the stair,
Through that, now, widely open door,
In that old, spacious, dancing-hall,
Behold the rustic country-ball
As it was seen, of yore;
If this was sin, what was it more
Than Israel did on Elim's shore?*

*See Exodus xv, 20.

And there the merry dance went on
From ten o'clock till one, at least,
Which, though, beyond the noon of night,
Yet, with a hearty appetite,
All join the midnight feast;
And after that the romp and play,
Then homeward by the peep o'day.

Where, now, are old-time singing schools
And old-time plays and country-dance?
We ask, and yet, how well we know—
As well call for old fiddling Joe,
Or knight of shield or lance;
All numbered with the things that were,
And only echo answers, "where?"

MASTER McDUFF—A WINTER E'EN.

"In winter's tedious night sit
by the fire
With good old folk and
let them tell thee tales."

THE aged parents, pensive and absorbed—
Aside, two weary heroes of the flail;
The pedagogue ensconced behind the stove—
In argument, some mooted point to prove,
Or, telling o'er, perchance, some wondrous tale
Of wondrous things which he had never seen—
In travels far abroad, where he had never been.

The urchins bending o'er their thumb-worn books,
Their arduous tasks in soften'd whispers learned—
Those awful tasks assigned at school, and shown
By him who had his way—and all his own;
Who vice and idleness contemned and spurned—
Whose whole make-up was of the sternest stuff,
And whose most moderate tasks were hard enough.

Yet, though he lounged behind the great old stove
And freely drank, he seldom took a spree;
A, not unwelcome winter-evening guest—
And, just, where he could get the very best,
There Master John McDuff was sure to be;
What wonder he should often suffer thirst
From eating so much sausage, souse, and leverworst?

No mortal man so learnéd and profound
As was the old-time, Irish pedagogue;
"What I know not is hardly worth the knowing,
My head, like ocean, full, yet, never overflowing;"
Such was his brief, but modest monologue;
When *he* talked politics, theology, or law,
Amazed all heard, and learned in silent awe!

His diction, too, was lofty, chaste, and pure,
His learnéd accent queer and quite unique;
And, when he spoke of teaching "arith*met*ics,"
Or, argued "screptur," or, sometimes, po*let*ics—
His special, favorite hobbies—so to speak—
No one could doubt and no one e'er replied,
Though father often smiled and mother sighed.

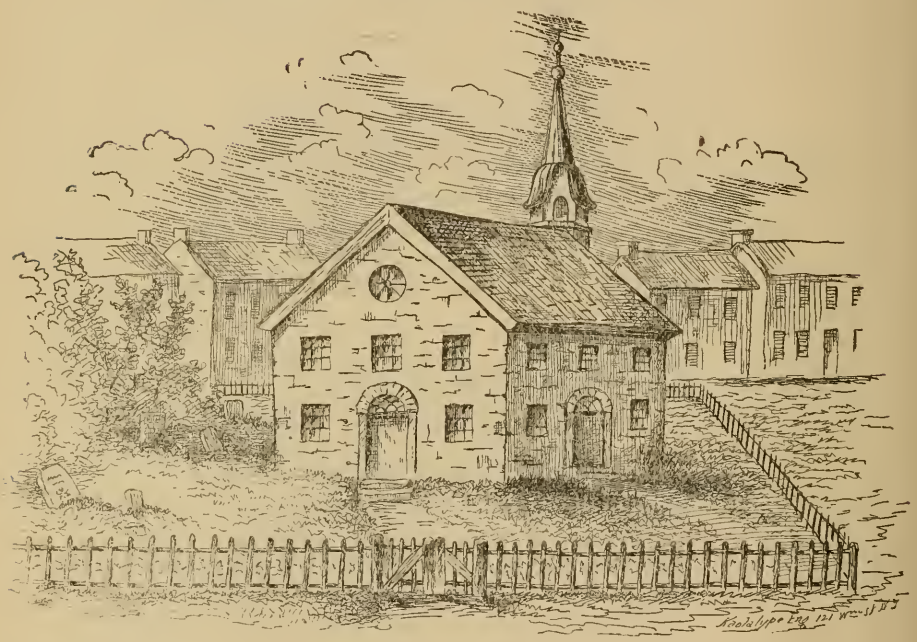
In physics he was almost ocean-deep—
In metaphysics, he was deeper still;
And—to sum up his wondrous qualities—
"Vars'd" in all-'isms,—'ics, and—'ologies;
As epicure, of course, he filled the bill,
And from the pitcher on the mantle-shelf,
He filled the mug and freely helped himself.

Predestinarian he was, and in
The school he taught he strickly followed Knox:(cks.)
Consistently with which, McDuff, of course,
Was foreordained to government by force;
In politics he, too, was orthodox;
But once, I mind, when Mother heard him say,
That Jackson was the peer of Henry Clay,
She peered aboon her specs and sighed, "*herrjeh!*"

As scrivener, he wrote the yearly notes,
And often kept the rural book accounts;
Presided at the annual settlements,
And verified the total of amounts;
He sat as umpire, or arranged disputes
And saved the fees and costs of many suits.

He, likewise, was the folk-recording scribe
And Solon of the old domestic hearth;
And O, what care and nervous pains he took
To enter truly in the Sacred Book,
The record of a marriage, death or birth ;
And, how all stood around with bated breath,—
I, yet can see, while he recorded *Mother's* death !

Much more might still be written of old Master John McDuff,
But, if all are so agreed, let us call this *quantum suff.*



JOHN AND 'LENORE.

"An' we had but a bridal o't
An' we had but a bridal o't;
We'd leave the rest unto gude luck
Altho' there should betide ill o't;
For bridal days are merry times,
An' young folk like the comin' o't,
An' scribblers, they, bang up their rhymes
An' pipers ha'e the bumming o't."
—Old Scotch Song.

THERE came a rustic lover in the merry days of yore,
On horseback, at the close of day to woo his loved 'Lenore;
(Yet, not like he of Germany,* came wooing from the dead,
But like a man of flesh and blood, hale flesh and blood to wed.)

His hat was high, his horse was spry, his saddle and bridle new,
His pants and vest were shining black, his spike-tail shining blue,
His horse was a young shining bay, well gaited, tried and true,
Fair leather was his martingale, coat-pad and crupper too.

His coat was cut just in the style,—its collar and shoulders high—
Gilt buttons new lit up the blue, as stars light up the sky;
Its waist was short, its tail was long, its sleeves tight as the skin,
With cuffs all buttoned closely up to robust wrists within.

*Wilhelm, the ghostly hero of Burger's celebrated ballad, "Ellenore."

He seldom wore an overcoat—if so, then it *was* cold;
Such coats were rare among young men, and e'en among the old;
His boots squaretoed morocco-tops, made by shoemaker Brown,
And o'er his boots his pantaloons were strapt severely down.

His bridle bit was silver-plate, stirrups and buckles too,
And all his other trappings were brand-splinter-spangle new;
His bridle head-stall was adorned with ribbons and rosette—
On bridal bliss and bridal joys his heart and hopes were set.

His saddle and his bridle screeched queer music as he rode,
His homemade, calfskin, squaretoed boots screeched queerer when he strode;
With Mason's Challenge Blacking shone his boots a'mirror bright—
A rooster saw his image there and challenged it to fight.

His shirt-breast and shirt-collar were all of the mammoth kind,
His satin stock was stiff and high and buckled tight behind;
His hair—cut short behind his ears — top-knot and locks were long,
His face was smooth—to tell the truth—his beard was not yet strong.

Upon his hands he wore kid gloves—buck*skin*, for aught I know—
And carried a neat riding-whip, to make his loper go:

He wore no glasses on his nose, he neither smoked
nor chewed,
Nor was he ever known to pose, like our immortal
"dude."

And though he never took the pledge—what now
might seem quite queer—
His healthful breath ne'er had the smell of whiskey,
rum, nor beer:
Within his fob he wore a watch—of half a pound or
more,
From which a ribbon, keys, and seals hung dangling
down before.

A red bandana kandkerchief—he had—and some-
times that
He carried in his swallow-tail and sometimes in his
hat:
But all this must not move our mirth nor yet provoke
our smiles,
Remembering that even such were *then* the latest
styles.

•

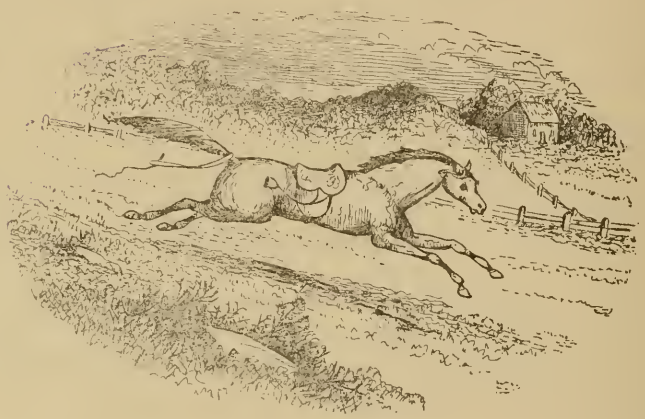
And in his spike-tail pockets, O, he had an ample
store
Of rare confections, nuts, and cakes, for his beloved
'Lenore:
Sweet were the kisses, neatly wrapt in loving senti-
ments—
By stealth, I heard him reading one, and these were
its contents,—

"Ask of each bright and twinkling star that gems
the vault above,
If in my wanderings afar, I ever ceased to love."
And last, but not the least, within the pocket of his
vest,
A fancy bottle of smelling-salts, of Denig's* very
best.

*Lewis Denig, then the principal druggist in Chambersburg.

And, thus, he came on Saturdays—but seldom did
he fail—
Upon his proudly loping nag, with flowing mane
and tail.
And when he came, he came in state, to woo his
loved 'Lenore,
Who sometimes met him at the gate, and sometimes
at the door.

Sometimes his horse was stabled, snug—sometimes
tied to a stake,
And there he neighed and pawed at night and kept
the boys awake:
E'en Solomon, the sage of old, in Proverbs so prolix—
Why, no one knows, has nowhere told, why boys
are born to tricks.



But "whys" are speculative things, while *facts* are
things of use—
By stealth, the boys went out one night and turned
John's loper loose:
They turned his saddle squarely 'round upon the
horse's back,
And fixed the crupper much in style of modern Kim-
ball-Jack.

Then, next in order, too, they stript bridle and martingale
From off the horse's head and neck and tied them to his tail:
They led him to the barn-yard gate, which opened to the lane,
And down the lane the loper went with flowing tail and mane.

John's loper reached the homestead gate of trappings nigh bereft,
For, of martingale and bridle there was very little left;
And when John's mother saw him, thus, her heart began to fail,
But the hindmost-foremost saddle and the bridle told the tale.[47]

Now, had it been our hero, John, that to that horse was tied,
The tragic scene might well recall the famed Mazeppa's ride:
Of all this trick poor John knew naught, nor did his loved 'Lenore;
The boys got safely back to bed, through stealth and steady door.

The roosters crowed, the morning dawned, our hero was still there—
As if 'twas meant to prove his love,—he did not seem to care;
So, when he found his horse was gone, few words had he to say—
He said he thought 'twas done so that he *could* not get away.

Nor was 'Lenore so tame a girl—to leave him in the lurch—
She ordered out a horse for John and rode with him to church,—

Upon her palf, right gracefully, 'Lenore rode by his side,
And well she kept her place, for she knew bravely how to ride.

They rode to church and home again—true to his idol sworn,—
John hung his hat up in the hall and stayed till Monday-morn';
On Monday-morning, quietly, about the break of day,
Alone on foot he tamely took his cheerless homeward way.

And there, upon his father's farm he wrought, the rustic swain—
Six long and weary days before he saw 'Lenore again;
And so he worked from day to day, all year—the noble son—
He served his father faithfully till he was twenty-one.

If such was rustic, farmer John, what must 'Lenore have been?
In truth, if not in poetry, she was a rural queen:
She was a rustic beauty, but of other days and ways,
When, to know and do one's duty won the highest meed of praise.

So hale and heft of body, and her limbs so neat and fleet,
And though not much "accomplished," she was prudent and discreet:
'Tis wisdom more than knowledge, too, that *gives* us moral tone—
Our knowledge comes from others, but our wisdom is our own.

While Knowledge, proud and haughty, boasts of many lettered lore,
Poor Wisdom bears it modestly, because she knows no more.*
Proud Knowledge perched on eagles' wings, yet often fails to rise,
While Wisdom deigns to *common* things, her destiny's the skies.

Such was the noble country-maid whom I have called 'Lenore—
The happy man who married her had wealth enough and more ;
In her, alone, was *real* wealth, though all was personal,
And such hath ever been true worth, and is, and ever shall—

Of labor she was not afraid,—to toil was not ashamed,
Remembering that idleness but leads to vice untamed :
She joined her sister in all work, and always took the lead ;
She often helped the boys along to tether up and feed.

She hailed the morning with the lark and with the lark she sang,
The thrush joined in the evening song that round the homestead rang ;
Sweet matins did Aurora greet, as from her bed she rose,
The cheerful lay went with the day, and vespers with its close.

*Cowper.

What though no grand pi*anoforte*, nor lute nor harp was there—
Where there are birds and girls to sing sweet music fills the air:
And what *is* music, much depends, at times, on how we feel—
To heart in tune it's in bassoon or hum of spinning-wheel.

'Twas once heard in the reapers' song and in the mower's scythe,
And in the sound of harvest-horn, when hearts were young and blithe;
When John was working in the field—'Lenore not far away—
The welkin rang from morn till night with the responsive lay.

Perchance, if neighbor-farmers were unusually throng,
They joined each other in the field—each other helped along;
Yea, thus in merry hearvest-time, good neighbors did, of yore—
If John came o'er to help to hay, his partner was 'Lenore.

If he had joined in cutting grain, she gleaned the stubbled ground;
If he had come to help to bind, she raked the sheaves he bound;
And so, in old-time harvest-field a many a match was made—
'Neath hat and bonnet, well concealed, a many a plot was laid.

Bright summer passed, brown autumn, too, at length the winter came,
But faithfully 'Lenore to woo, true John came, all the same;

His age was now past twenty-one, and loyal he had
been ;
'Lenore had been a faithful child and, now, was past
eighteen.

The time had come, and always does—when Cupid's
on the wing—
'Lenore had bridal things in store, and John the
wedding-ring.
They talked the subject o'er and o'er—'Lenore said
—somewhat sad—
"I'm willing, John, but then, you know, consent
must first be had."

John asked her father for consent—her father said
him "*Yea;*"
But when he asked her mother—O ! her mother said
him, "*Nay!*"
Poor John was smitten to the heart, and sadly went
his way ;
'Lenore, poor girl, sobbed "John, good bye ! hoping
for a better day."

Her mother, loth to part with her, hoped John
would come no more,
But when the day came round to come, John came,
just as before ;
Meantime, 'Lenore still stayed and served,—the same
sweet faithful maid,
Her parents still revered and feared and their re-
quests obeyed.

And with the snows of winter came John with his
jumper sleigh,
And coverlet spread o'er the back, a riding round
that way ;
And took the girls a visiting—to church and sing-
ing-school,
To social parties and to dance, according to the rule.*

*The Custom.

'Lenore was growing happier, and hopeful still, was she,
And John was feeling better, when his own free man was he ;
To art 'Lenore was not in debt—her hair was all her own,
Her pearly teeth were solid and all native to the bone.

Her dimpled cheeks were full of health, and ruddy as the rose,
Her eyes were heaven in disguise and perfect was her nose ;
She never knew the kind of shoe in which the corn-crop thrives,
She *might* have worn neat number fours, but *did* wear number fives.

A well developed chest she had, a neat, but robust waist,
And this was just because she had not *laced* herself to waste ;
Around her waist she wore a belt, broad, yellow, green and red,
A Leghorn bonnet or calash she wore upon her head.

A bonnet trimmed with ribbons, gay, with feathers, and so high,
John's modest mother used to say 'twas aiming for the sky ;
Her sleeves were style of "mutton-leg," distent with hoops and bows,
Stuffed full as any feather-tick, with—feathers, I suppose.

In winter-time she wore a cloak of genuine Scotch plaid—
And while such garments were in vogue they did not look so bad ;

Upon her hands she wore kid gloves—*woolen*, in winter time—
In winter-time, to wear kid gloves, was almost thought a crime.

But all this need not move our mirth nor e'en provoke our smiles—
It matters not about their worth—such were the latest styles;
Meanwhile, 'Lenore in vain implored her mother to consent;
In vain her prayers and tears she poured, for she would not relent.

In vain she importuned and begged to know the reason why—
The only answer given was this—"you'll know that by and by."
And thus, poor girl, kept in suspense and hindered in her love,
Was wondering what great offense John could be guilty of:

At length, unable to resist a plea so plaintly plead,
Her mother said the reason is this—and this is what she said:
"'Lenore, you know you are too young, and John is rather green,
And neither he nor you much of the world nor life have seen."

"O! mother, is that all you have against poor John to say!
Remember, mother, that we, all, are ripening every day;
How, we have often heard *you* tell—you and *your* John began;
Why cannot John and I as well begin on that same plan!"

"How young you were when you were wed, and how
you had to shift,
And, yet, how well you got ahead by industry and
thrift;
How you had always something for your larder and
your shelf,
And how the Lord helps every one, who tries to help
himself."

"How you had put your trust in God and kept your
powder dry;
How when the tempter threatened you, resistance
made him fly,
How you kept watch and ward against the witches,
wolves and elves,
And how you for the pennies cared—the dollars for
themselves."

"Now *we'll* not ask for anything but what you choose
to give;
Consent, and we'll show how we can by love and labor
live;
Though bread and water be my lot, consent," implored
'Lenore;—
"Consent, though I should share a cot upon a cabin-
floor."

Her mother said, "you foolish girl, you know not
what you say;
Your heart has turned your head all wrong, and you
are going astray;
I know 'twere easy to consent—and hazzard such a
living,
But not so easy to repent and ask to be forgiven."

'Lenore made no reply to this—'twould not have been
polite—
But with a vesper-kiss she bade her mother a good
night;

That night 'Lenore soliloquized—"what *could* those
strange words mean;
You know, 'Lenore, you are too young, and John is
rather green;

"And neither he nor you much of the world or life
have seen:
Too young! your heart has turned your head! not
much of life have seen—
What more, I cannot tell, but Mary Marg'ret Moore,
it's said,
Was married at *six*teen and 's doing very well."

"Well, John is now past twenty-one and I am past
eighteen,
And, now, just let me think upon what we have
learned and seen:
Our education is complete—that's what we got at
school—
We both have learned to read and write and cipher
by the rule."

"And John has been to Baltimore—twice, with his
father's team,
And carried me twice on his back across a running
stream;[48]
Three times at least, we've been to town and seen
the people's fair;
We saw the circus and the clown the lion and the
bear."

"We both attended catechise and both have joined the
church,
And when we went to Paddy's school, we got our
share of birch;
It's true that neither John nor I much of the world
have seen,
But *is* it true that I'm too young, and John is rather
green?"

"Too young! I know what *that* may mean, but rather green!—well, well—
I'll wait till John comes here again—perhaps green John can tell;
I've tried the test of merry-thought—not only once, but more—
And every time John was the first to enter at that door."

"We've tried the double almond-trick—my philopine has he;
I've even had my fortune told, and all the signs agree;
I went and saw old granny Grimes—she looked into my hand—
She said my lover's name was *John*, a tiller of the land."

"She looked into my hand again, with specs upon her nose,
And said my father would consent, but mother would oppose.
She also said no power on earth could break the force of love—
Of love that's true and had its birth in that which rules above."

"She said that such was that of John—(and 'well I know mine *is*')
She said, in three weeks we'd be one—he mine and I'd be his:"
O'er, hopes and fears, thus, did she weep and thus, soliloquize,
Until she wept herself to sleep with sad and tearful eyes.

Next Saturday John came again, but later than before,
Upon his loper, up the lane, to see his loved 'Lenore;

She wondered why he came so late—had feared he'd
come no more—
She did not say this at the gate—she met him at the
door.

His horse was stabled, fed, and groomed, while they
went in the room,
Where father sat and talked awhile, but mother got
the broom ;
She got the broom and swept the floor, as if to find
a pin ;
But, lo ! she swept out through the door where John
had just come in !*

The tired parents soon retired, leaving the sitting-
room—
Not thinking that they left it to affianced bride and
groom ;
At half past ten o'clock, that night, they parted at
the door ;
John mounted horse and homeward went, and to her
room, 'Lenore.

How dark was that mid-winter night ; how cold and
death-like still ?
The dogs would neither bark nor bite, for "Tauser"
had a pill ;
"The best-laid schemes of mice and men gang often-
times aglee,"
And the harder we confine a bird 'twill struggle to
be free.

We think we know what we have seen,—who knows
what he shall see ?
The fool can tell us what has been, but who, what is
to be ?

*An old time hint to an unwelcome guest, that his room would be preferred to his company.

The father and the mother knew 'Lenore had gone to bed,
But, did not know, till morning, that she had the homestead fled!

Nor, till a few days afterwards—John had returned that night,
And that 'Lenore had joined him and with him had taken flight;
How he had got the ladder that would neither break nor bend,
And placed it 'neath her window at the garden-gable-end.

And how 'Lenore upon it, step, by step, from round to round,
At length had landed safely in John's arms, upon the ground:
It sounds more like a romance, but its not a whit less true,
That his horse's feet were muffled by removing every shoe.

That his horse was tightly tethered to a post out in the lane,
Where the lovers, then, forgathered, to mount and take the rein:
They were head and heart determined to take the "lover's leap;"
And, so, they had arranged it, what they did, they did "for keep."

John leaped into his saddle from the hard and frozen ground,
'Lenore leaped from a fence-rail at a burley, bouncing, bound;
John held his sweet heart's band box and her bundle, on before,
While, with her arms around him clasped, to John held on 'Lenore.

While John held tightly on before, 'Lenore held on behind,
The loper's mane and tail, once more, were streaming to the wind;
Had John but been Mazeppa, or Mazeppa had a bride,
The scene might well remind one of the Cossack's famous ride.—

John did not first call on the clerk—no license did he need—
The license, then, to do such work, was just to be agreed;
Strong was the matrimonial band, and rarer was divorce—
'Twas not so much a rope of sand, decreed to part, of course.

At dawn of Sunday-morning stood her mother at the door,
And vainly, vainly calling her "'Lenore! 'Lenore! 'Lenore!!"
Yes, she called but got no answer, and she found an empty room,
And the moment she beheld it, she thought upon the broom!

And she thought upon her daughter,—so faithful and so true—
While she smote upon her bosom, and her heart began to rue;
The men went in the garden to indulge a useless stare
At an open, gaping window and a ladder standing there.

It was a gloomy Sunday, and excitement ran quite high;
But they said "we'll wait till Monday, then we'll raise the hue and cry;"

On Monday morn' they blew the horn, and started on the search,
But found that both 'Lenore and John had been to Sunday-church!

Then to the nearest 'squire, went the parents in a rage;
Said his honor, "lets inquire—what might be your daughter's age?"
"She's *eight*een," said her mother"—"yes, little over" said her Pa;
Then the girl has got her freedom," said the 'squire, "*that's the law!*"

But the mother, not contented, threatened John with suit or chase,
But the 'squire had no process that would suit for such a case;
They talked of a *replevin*, or a *habeas-corpus* writ,
But the squire did not think that that would help the case a bit.

As for a *habeas-corpus*—from all that he could learn,
John having got the body, should be ruled to make return;
The father, always cautious, said, there still might be a flaw,
For the 'squires were the devil for their blunders in the law.

"That is gospel," said the 'squire," then, go meet John face to face—
And your daughter—talk it over—try and *compromise* the case;
"From what I've heard 'Lenore has been a true and faithful child,
And John is every inch a man—then, be ye reconciled."

They next went to a lawyer to get some more advice,
But they did not take much of it, for they did not like the price;
The mother, being spokesman, she went on to state the case,
But before she got half through it—well,—he smiled all o'er his face.

She told him what the 'squire said was lawful female age,
And when he heard eigh*teen* he said, "that 'squire is a *sage!*"
"A sage!" said she, "that's pretty tea! we want to know the *law!*"
"Well, don't get in a rage;" said he, "that squire is a *saw!*"

"A saw!," said she, "I never saw such see-saw in in my life!
Before you tell us what's the law, 'Lenore may be John's wife!"
She told him what the 'squire said about the writ—replevin—
What faith *she* had in numbers odd, especially in seven;

What the fortune-teller said—"go turn the grind-stone backwards,"
And how much faith some people had in flights of crows and blackbirds;
Said he "I always leave such stuff to children and old women,—
At eighteen girls are old enough to be the wives of freemen."

Still, there was *habeas corpus* and from all that he could learn,
John, having got the body, might be ruled to make return;

But the woman, all suspicious, said there *still* might be a flaw,
For the lawyers beat old satan with their hooks and crooks in law.

"Try the gospel," said the lawyer, "Meet thy foeman face to face,
And agree with him right quickly, lest you aggravate the case;"
Said she, "*one* thing I understand—there's no denying *that*—
You and the '*squire* play underhand—that's under the same *hat*;"

"So let that be, but what's your fee,—five dollars, eh, five dollars?
It makes the lawyer laugh to *get*, but when he *gives*, he hollers."
Said he, "*ten* dollars is my fee, but as that would be even,
And you have faith in numbers odd, we'll make it just eleven."

"Eleven!" cried she, "O! worse and worse! there, take the lucky *seven;*
You miserly, extorting curse, you'll never get to heaven!"
"Good day," said they, and so said he; said she, "I'll lay a wager—
Before the next one comes eighteen, I'll tie her and I'll cage her."

The lawyer thus soliloquized, in dreamy cogitation,—
"I wouldn't be the least surprised to get an invitation;"
His clients homeward took their way, thus, brooding o'er their trouble—
"How do the worries of each day the last one's seem to double!"

They next went to the clergyman for further consultation—
Of that they got abundance, yet, but little consolation;
They told him what their trouble was—how they had lost their daughter—
How she had tak'n the lover's leap and farmer John had caught her.

Her age, they said, was but eighteen—perhaps a little over,
To church had been, to *his* belonged—"'Lenore? O, yes, I know her;"
But he would know,—he said he would—just what was their objection;
'Lenore, he thought, had surely made a very good selection:

That he had often heard the girl was always true and faithful;
And, as for farmer John, why should the young man be distasteful?
The father smiled, but speechless sat—the mother answered briefly—,
What all against the match she had, and this comprised it chiefly:

'Lenore, she said, was quite too young, and John was rather green,
And neither he nor she much of the world or life had seen:
The preacher smiled benignantly, and, kindly, thus he spoke:
"From the acorn to the acorn-crop the way lies through the oak:"

"All things from small beginnings come — not by miracles, but growth—
And love and labor joined in one—God's blessing prospers both:

Love is an inspiration, and its essence is divine,
And it tends to exaltation when with virtue it's combined."

"Love's elastic and expansive, and sometimes a little blind,
And it's apt to be explosive, if too closely it's confined:
Now, since John's a worthy farmer, and he's honest to the core,
How can the marriage harm her, if he truly loves 'Lenore?"

"Or, in words still more laconic;—if 'Lenore, in truth, loves John,
And their love is pure Platonic—if I join the two in one?
It seems to me, belovéd, to regain your erring child,
'Twill be wisest to forgive her and be fully reconciled."

And then he quoted scripture:
How a man shall leave his father and his mother, for his wife;
How the twain shall love each other and be *one* flesh all through life.
Here, the good dame interrupted, and, said she—just where he ceased—
"*You* want a merry wedding and a merry wedding-feast."

"Now, I think I understand it—law and gospel, all the same,
Are playing underhanded at the matrimonial game;"
The preacher took it kindly, and he modestly replied—
"So far it's true, precisely, and besides—to kiss the bride."

And he also told them, further, that John and lost 'Lenore
Were there and set the wedding-day, the Sunday just before:—
"The what!" the startled mother cried, and sank upon the floor,
And in a fit, hysteric, sighed—"'Lenore! 'Lenore 'Lenore!!"

The father and the preacher and his wife and sev'ral friends
Administered restoratives and tried to make amends:
The change of scene was serious, and the preacher deemed it best
To use some words of prayer instead of levity and jest.

When the fainting one recovered, yet, a sadden'd look she wore,
And the only word she uttered was the name of her 'Lenore:
O, the pain of heart-strings severed—the parent from the child!
E'en the thought of separation drives a mother almost wild!

She, in broken accents whispered to her *own*, submissive John—
"If Heaven hath so decreed it, then let Heaven's will be done!"
And now, restored to consciousness—still remembering what he said—
She inquired of the minister—when and *where* they would be wed.

"At the house of her betrothéd"—and the dame began to cry—
"In a fortnight from the morrow," was the minister's reply:

"No, no!" exclaimed the matron, as, beseechingly she plead,
Not at any other homestead than the one from which she fled!"

"If the lovers mean true living, they must truly live and learn—
To the home from which she's riven, 'Lenore must first return—
To the home where she was born—saw the light and first drew breath—
Now, so desolate and lorn, or, there *I* shall soon see death:"

"She must enter where she fled—up the ladder she went down—
Must retrace her wayward steps, to the very topmost round:
Must enter at the window, whence she took her foolish flight,
To become a stolen bride, upon that dark and dreary night:"

"And, farmer, John, must bring her on his loper to the door—
The eloper must return her, if he means to wed 'Lenore—
He must enter that lone chamber to receive his future bride,
Through that window and remember the eloper's costly ride."

("Yes, make him pay the costs," said the Father—said it *twice*—
What we had to pay the lawyer for that strange piece of advice")

'Lenore and John must not forget that time makes
all things even—
Their grievous wrong they must confess, and ask to
be forgiven:"

"What e'er of honor or disgrace be in this love affair,
We'll meet the lovers face to face—the marriage
must be there.
And they must both remember—if it's anything
to soothe—
That the course of such true lovers never did, nor
will run smooth:"

The minister with hoary head—in accents grave, but
mild,—
"So let it be," he softly said, "and be ye reconciled:
Domestic peace is heaven on earth—of blessings,
royal queen—
Let her, as at an angel's birth, pervade the hallowed
scene."

"Let Love, with her transforming power, make mar-
ried life divine,
And all these bitter waters turn to Galilean wine."
So spake the pious minister, and bade them go in
peace—
Make ready for the wedding-day and for the wedding-
feast.

In peace they went back to their home, but sad and
sore of heart,
To think, so soon, with their 'Lenore they would be
called to part.
Meantime, the good peacemaker went and saw
'Lenore and John—
Told them how he obtained consent, but what must
first be done:

The young folks seemed well satisfied and promised
to obey—
To make amends and to provide against the wedding
day;
He told John he'd depend on him as if he had been
sworn—
He always took men by their word and oxen by the
horn.

Next day on their return were seen John and his
stolen bride—
The two upon one horse, again, but, tamer was the
ride;
Her bundle and her band-box, he held kindly, as be-
fore,
And round his waist with both her arms clung peni-
tent 'Lenore.

What were their thoughts as, thus, they rode to
meet—they scarce knew what—
A smile, a frown, contempt, consent, to be forgiven
or not?
Of one, before the Master brought, perhaps, thought
poor 'Lenore—
Who, though accused condemned her not, but said
"go, sin no more."

And as the homestead hove in sight, 'Lenore began
to weep—
Now realizing that the road of penitence was steep;
"O, John!" she sobbed, "how can I face my angry
parents now?
And yet, with you, how can I break my solemn mar-
riage vow?"

"Well do not fret 'Lenore" said he, "nor thus re-
proach yourself,
What e'er of shame or blame there be, I'll take upon
myself;"

"But our faith, troth plighted we must keep, unbroke', at any cost,
To honor hold, though last go gold and all beside be lost."

"Come weal, come wo, or come what may—our vows we must not break—
But sure your parents will say *yea*, for peace and honor's sake;"
Thus, crooning o'er, John and 'Lenore near to the gate had come,
While "Tip" and "Tauser," as before, barked them a welcome home.

John sidled to the upping-block, to let 'Lenore alight—
She nimbly lit and dropped her frock,* somewhat in sorry plight;
Her bundle and her band-box took, as they were handed down,
All penetrated with the look of urchins, standing 'round.

While all the rest seemed glad to see the prodigal's return,
The troubled mother seemed to be half reconciled, but stern;
'Lenore with many doubts and fears, of what would be her doom,
Approached her mother at the porch, where she stood with the broom;

And, pointing toward the garden, where, she said, "though you must lout,†
You'll find the ladder standing there—come in where you went out;

*Her dress, or over-skirt which, as was the fashion, had been raised while riding.

†Stoop. (Scotch.)

And then, to John half smile, half grin—she opened
wide the door,
And as he entered she swept in where she swept out
before."

With band-box and with bundle went 'Lenore, some-
what begrimed—
The ladder that ne'er broke nor bent, submisssively,
she climbed;
She climbed with gripe and steady step to the window
she left wide,
Where John, before the window stood, and helped her
down, inside.

("The best laid schemes of mice and men gang
oftentimes aglee"—
The fool can tell what he has seen, but who, what
he shall see?)
Some stood outside and watched 'Lenore, some in-
side, watching John,
The yielding dame said, "in this game, perhaps both
sides have won."

Though, still, disposed to be severe, she finally gave
o'er,
When kith and kin and dog and cat were welcoming
'Lenore;
On bended knees, John and 'Lenore, by conscience-
lashings driven,
The injured parents did implore and begged to be
forgiven.

The window was wide open, still, just as 'Lenore had
put it,
But at her mother's word and will, she promptly
went and shut t;
"And one thing more," said she,—"before—I almost
had forgot it—
You, John, must take that ladder back and put it
where you got it."

John took it to the wagon shed—a penance for his sins,
And there he hung it overhead upon two steady pins;
And as he hung it on the pins, he said, "good Heaven! forefend—
If matrimony so begins, ye gods, how may it end?"

All things were now in *statu quo*, still, no consent nor pardon—
Could all these efforts to undo, a mother's heart but harden?
John and 'Lenore, both sad and sore, upon their bended knees,
Sought pardon and consent, once more, and urged their plaintive pleas.

The fearful crisis, now, had come—"to be or not to be"
The wife of John,—the question was, could "Nay," be changed to "Yea?"
The mother took her daughter's hand and raised her from the floor,
And, weeping, fell upon her neck and cried, "yes! yes! 'Lenore!"

'Twas well, to word and promise, true, the lovers had returned,
But in the school of love their first hard lesson had been learned;
For two whole days of that same week, the country 'round, was ridden,
For two weeks preparations made, and all the guests were bidden.

A fortnight from that very day the wedding guests assembled—
The homestead changed from grave to gay, a fairy-scene resembled;

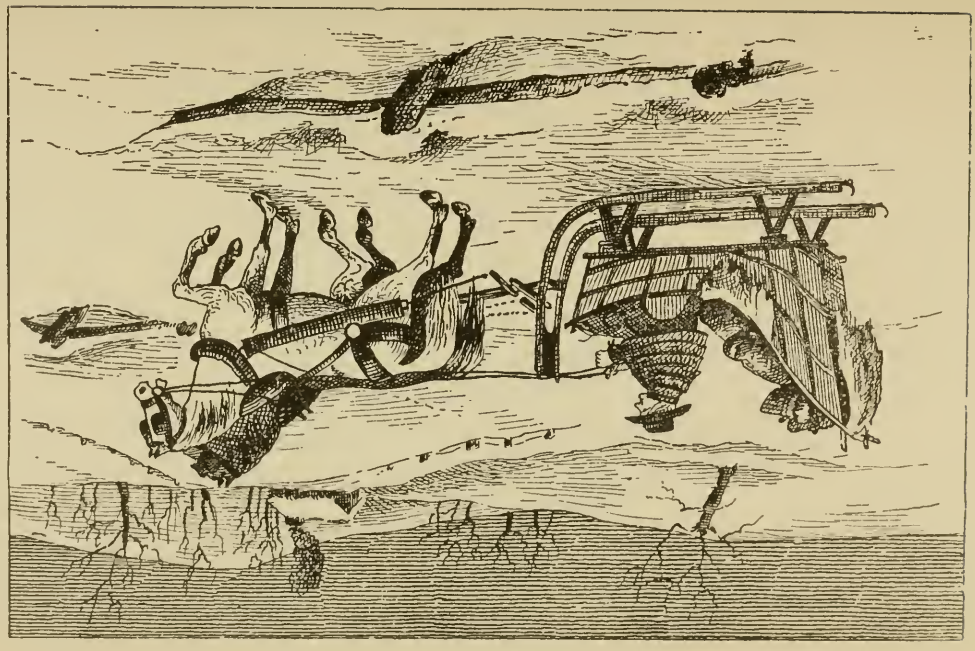
They came on horseback, in barouche, in carryall and chaise;
In jumpers, block-sleds, or, on foot—in high and low-backed sleighs.

Among them came the minister, punctilious, primp, precise;
The 'squire and the counsellor, who gave that strange advice:
The grand old mansion, built of stone, large rooms and spacious hall,
Stairways and porches, broad and long, could scarcely hold them all.

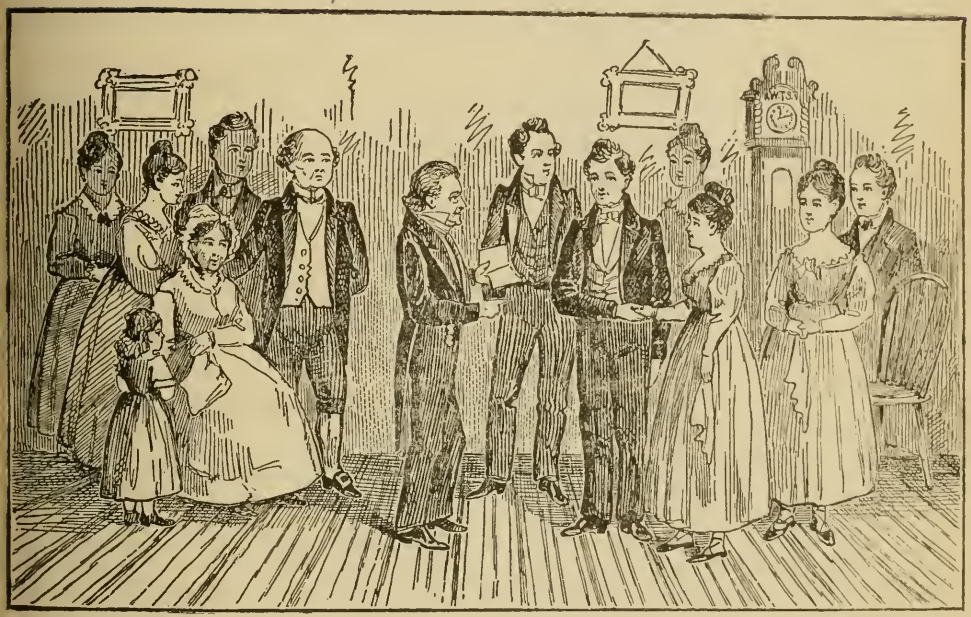
There were the kindred, kith and kin,—the uncles, aunts, and cousins,
And sturdy farmers, thick-and-thin, by families and dozens;
In bell-crowned hats and redtop-boots, baize leggins and gilt spurs,
Plaid cloaks, great coats, and long surtouts, trimmed with the finest furs.

The lawyer wore a ruffled shirt, the 'squire one of linen—
A spotless nether garment, but 'twas of domestic spinnin';
The women, in their ruffled caps, and quaint old-time silk dresses;
The girls, with high-backed tortoise-shells, side-combs and flowing tresses;

The gay, embroidered, snow white capes, broad belts, red, green and yellow,
Their silken hose o'er Venus-shapes, and shoes of black prunello;
Bright, sparkling beads about their necks adorned their native graces,
A joyous light beamed from their eyes and health glowed in their faces.



In bridal garments, now, arrayed, the youthful lovers
stood,
To seal their solemn pledges made, for evil or for
good;
With book in hand the preacher stands while vows
are made for life,—
While ring is placed and joined are hands, declares
them man and wife.



In sober mood the parents were, content, but sad of
heart,
For what to bride and groom meant "join," to *them*,
meant only, *part!*
How simple was this sacrament! yet, solemn and
sublime,
Though choir, nor bells, nor organ sent to heaven
their cheery chime.

No gilded altar wreathed in flowers 'neath fretted
roof and dome,
No laureled arch nor vernal bowers—'twas Hymen's
heaven *at home!*
The preacher said these witnesses—all these could
testify—
John and 'Lenore were man and wife, yet all of these
might die:

He gave them a certificate, with day and date,
and all,
To keep in chest or drawer, safe, or hang it on the
wall:
And, lest all other proofs go lost of this, their bonny
bridal,
The same was, by the pedagogue, recorded in the
Bible.

So, when the marriage-knot had been, thus tied and
certified,
And John paid down the marriage-fee, the preacher
kissed the bride:
He said, at such a happy time, he scarcely could do
less;
Then all shook hands with bride and groom and
wished them happiness.

The one, of all that gathering, upon the homestead-
floor,
Who greeted them most warmly was, the mother of
'Lenore!
When all that *was* to be, was said, and all was cer-
tified,
And all that was to be, was given, some laughed and
others cried.

Some were rejoiced to think how well 'Lenore and
John had done;
Her parents wept a daughter lost and *his* a noble son;

Meantime, the wedding-feast came on for bride and
groom and guest,
And which, of all the feasts on earth, the preacher
liked the best.

And such a feast! a feast for all—the massive tables
groaned
'Neath luscious loads from field and stall, for epi-
cures enthroned,
'Round snow-white table-cloths, all homespun, as of
yore,
Whose ample folds and trailing swaths hung almost
to the floor.

There were decanters, bowls, and trays, quaint glass
and china-ware,
Those famous plates with sailing "ships and houses
in the air:"
Beside the tow'ring coffee-pot, an humbler urn with
tea,—
In queer ceramics, quaintly wrought—as quaintly as
could be:

Above, a bridge a river spann'd that wound across
the lea,
Below, a tower inverted and far off were ships at sea.
Ye gods O, what an appetite the rustic stomach
blessed!
And that with kyte* and conscience right, what
could it not digest?

Before they ate, the man of God gave thanks and
said a grace—
He prayed their food might do them good, and none
might go to waste:
And when the wedding-cake came 'round, and ah!
the blushing wine,
Nor pledge, nor conscience-scruple bound—nor did
he once decline:

*The belly. [Burns.]

He said the Lord had made them all—e'en woman
for man's sake;
For drinking wine he quoted Paul—just "for the
stomach's ache."
He said he had no conscience-qualms, and thought it
no offence;
He also quoted from the Psalms—*for* wine, but
naught against.

He said the more he studied it, the evidence increased—
And spoke of water turned to wine at Cana's mar-
riage-feast;
That it was only its *abuse* that led to sins and crimes,
And cited for its moderate use, good men of olden-
times.

And while these proofs so clear and big were quoted
all so strong,
His hearers joined him in a swig,—no matter, right
or wrong:
By this time it was evident—as sang the bard divine—
That wine makes glad the heart of man and oil his
face to shine.

The swelling tide of wine o'erflowed the bound of
wit and will—
"The feast of reason and the flow of soul" ran high-
er still:
The rural dames, (whose other names must not be
mentioned here,)
Loquacious o'er their wine became, and merry o'er
good cheer.

They talked the matrimonial theme and love elope-
ments o'er,
And all said John was not too green to woo and win
'Lenore:

Her mother then declared again—as she had lately done—
That this was one of those rare games at which both sides had won.

One ventured the extreme belief, as, thus, she wined and dined—
More luck attended stolen brides than any other kind;
Another, — more conservative, —said "be that as it may,
To every day sufficient is the evil of the day ;

This love affair, two weeks ago, much evil did portend,
But let us all be thankful, now, for such a happy end."
The minister, the lawyer, and the 'squire bowed the head,
And all the dames assembled there, declared that wisely said.

While, thus, they sat and ate and drank and talked as gossips will,
'Though others waited for their turn, these talked and lingered still.
The younger guests had now withdrawn to an adjoining room,
Where they remained and entertained the happy bride and groom.

At length the old rejoined the young—but *that* day few were old—
And then some bridal songs were sung and bridal jokes were told :
When mirth and song began to ebb, and a request was made,
'Lenore her handy-work brought forth and modestly displayed—

Her quilts—the royal "Irish chain," of yellow, white and green—
Pronounced by each and every dame the prettiest ever seen:
But when the modest bride brought out the glorious "rising sun,"
And several other patterns, but some scarcely, yet, half done:

One thought *this* was the finest one, another said 'twas *that*,
And thus the hours glid smoothly on in homely old-time chat,
But when she brought her coverlets—those wonders of the loom—
In which appeared the heavenly hosts, sun, stars, and half the moon;

Yea, more; in some, the border was a row of poplar trees,
In others, in each corner was a flag flung to the breeze;
All wove' from threads 'Lenore had spun from wool her sheep had worn—
Yea, which her own right willing hand from her own sheep had shorn,

Their admiration passed all bounds, astonishment ran wild—
With one accord the dames exclaimed, "O! what a faithful child!"
"And all agreed that—that, before, girls ought to think of wedding,
They *should* provide an ample store of quilts and other bedding.

The wonder of the wonders was the sampler[49] which she brought—
A still more wondrous handiwork by her own cunning wrought;

It bore a record of the day and year when 'twas begun,
But like the works we do for love,—O, when would it be done?

Some needle-printed legends of some saints and angels, too,
All worked in many-colored silks—the saints were mostly blue;
And here, were birds of Paradise, of plumage rich and rare,
And there were bugs and butterflies, enough, and some to spare;

And in the middle was a ship with sails spread to the breeze,
While in each of the corners was a hive of busy bees;
And there were bucks and does and hinds and reindeer—a whole team—
Besides queer fish of many kinds that never saw a stream.

And there were legends of folk lore, and antique A B C's,
And, probably a dozen more of those old poplar trees;
Whole texts of scripture-verses, and rare mottoes, not a few;
The sun, the moon, the stripes and stars, her name and birthday, too.

Beneath all these there was a space—'Lenore was heard to say,—
With modest mien and blushing face—"left for my wedding day;"
And then, the old folks joined the young in harmony once more,
And still another song they sung in praise of good 'Lenore.

Thus, wore the afternoon away, around the homestead hearth,
In song, in story, and in play and old-time rural mirth.
Here was a scene, like scenes above, that gave foretaste of heaven—
Of one restored to filial love, an erring child forgiven:

* * * * *

And, as the evening shades came on, the elder folks retired
To their respective neighboring homes—just what the young desired:
And, thus without e'en that restraint which Age on Youth imposes,
Youth frolicked free and danced its cheeks as ruddy as the roses:

Again the festal board was spread, again the guests sat 'round;
The more they ate and drank, the more the ample board was crowned;
And so the joyful scene went on till far into the night,
And merrier grew the jest and song, but pale the embers' light.

I see the merry, dancing throng, the maiden's blushing cheek;
I hear the old, familiar song, and swains in whispers speak:
Methinks I *see* old fiddling Joe—so natural does it seem—
As 'round and 'round the dancers go—as in a pleasant dream.

(In dreams the past comes back to us —a weird, nocturnal train!
What, but a dream, is life, though, thus, we live it o'er again!)
At length exhausted nature sank, and merriment ran low,
While fiddling Joe, bent low and lank, hung weary o'er his bow.

When sober Age had gone apart from such an old-time wedding,
Then came the merry midnight march and finally—"the bedding;"[50]
All this the wedding-day brought forth, and part of that good night,
But, O, what odd predicaments came with the morning light!

On sheds and trees and ricks of straw, were tongues and shafts and wheels,
And from his room the bridegroom saw his pants hung by the heels:
Some boots were found on posts or stakes, full half a mile away;
Behind the barn upon a stack was found a gallant's sleigh.

In lone by-ways were other sleighs and harness hung on fences,
While upside down there was a chaise, and one *non est inventus:*
A cry was raised—a hue and cry—the bridegroom's horse was stole'!
But search revealed him "high and dry"—hid in a quarry-hole.

And other horses were concealed in undergrowth or ditches,
And others, still, in wood or field, all ridden by the witches;
The night was clear and cold and bright, and all was calm and still,
And "Tauser" did not bark that night, for "Tauser" had a pill.

There stood a group of innocents, among them fiddling Joe—
Who went, and, for small recompense, put things in *statu quo;*
By this time it was near high-noon, and still another feast
Stood ready for the bride and groom—the last, but not the least;

For still there was no lack of cheer for bride and groom and guest,
But, as before, enough and more—all of the very best;

Here words and wit and wine flowed free, and old folks now so clever—
Indeed, the parents seemed to be more reconciled than ever.

A younger brother said he thought John looked so like a true man,—
A younger sister said she thought 'Lenore looked like a woman;
Another brother said, "O, John—his chin has only knap on—
'Lenore looks like a woman, because she has a cap on."*

For this, his rude contempt of court, the youth was mildly punished;
That is, by way of change of sport, was with the rod admonished—
The afternoon was wearing late—the night would soon come on,
When they must hold the infair at the home of farmer John.

And as the bridal party moved by merry twos and twos,
The merry dames from yard and porch flung slippers, pumps, and shoes;
The mother of 'Lenore was so far conquered by the groom,
That when he was about to go, she flung away the broom.

The older folk went in barouche, in carryalls and chaise,
The younger folks went in their sleds, their jumpers and their sleighs:

*Such was then the fashion—brides wore caps.

Behold the rustic cavalcade, thus, passing down the lane,
And ah! the sudden halt it made—the intercepting chain[51]!

There stand those rustic innocents, each with his hat in hand,
And from each rustic, gallant swain, a tribute they demand;
And as each one his tribute pays, the merry laugh goes round,
And for each merry man and maid the chain drops to the ground.

But maugre all the tribute paid, to pass the harmless chain,
They soon were intercepted by a fence across the lane;
A wag of wondrous wit remarked—"I move we save our pence;"
His girl—a girl so wondrous smart—moved that *he* move the fence.

* * *

But as it was with wheels and boots, with harness and with breeches,
They all agreed it was the work of bogles, elves, and witches;
Yet, there it was, and though they might condemn and disapprove it,
What could they do, but go to work and patiently remove it?

This done, 'mid laughter and applause, the marriage-train moved on,
Still nearer to the homestead of our hero, farmer John;

But, as the train moved on so gay, aglow with health and beauty,
Behold a grapevine spanned the way, demanding customs duty.

This time a group of innocents held *John's* end of the line,
But to each one small recompense, at once removed the vine;
Again the cavalcade moved on as gayly as before,
And soon, once more, at home was John with wooed and won 'Lenore.

And here an old-time welcome and a feast awaited all,
And past the midnight-hour ran the old-time infair-ball;
The minister was there, of course, though more to feast than dance—
To feast, and feed himself and horse he never missed a chance.

But, here there was no wedding-march to bed the bride and groom;
John could, perhaps e'en in the dark, have found the bridal-room:
The night was short and with the dawn came mirth and melody,
And feast and song and dance went on throughout the winter-day.

John had no fancy needle-work nor sampler to be aired,
But, his mother showed the coverlets and quilts she had prepared;
Besides much other bedding and of linens—what a store!
Of table-cloths and toweling, much the same as had 'Lenore.

A good old dame made this remark, and took a pinch
of snuff,
"It was not so with Noah, who provided no such
stuff;"
Another, as she raised her spec's, with one eye on
the clock,
Remarked, "from what the scripture saith, *he* only
had live stock."

Another, sighing as she said, "folks should not
think of wedding,
Until they have an ample store of good and solid
bedding;"
On that all joined her in a sip—a sip of the fer-
mented—
And as they sipped and smacked the lip—that meant
that all assented.

And so they sat and "dined and wined" and chatted,
highly pleased,
And now and then they puffed and snuffed, and now
and then they sneezed;
Nor was there there a good old dame who sipped and
chatted more
Than she who long witheld consent—the mother of
'Lenore.

* * * * *

The infair o'er John took 'Lenore back to her home,
again—
There, as the custom was, of yore, till April to re-
main;
Meantime, of course, he saw his wife when it was
opportune;
And, still, there live who know such was the old-
time honey-moon.

When spring came on, 'Lenore and John—the happy,
hopeful twain—
Invited all their friends to join the hanging of the
crane;

To consecrate a new sweet-home upon a fertile farm,
With many things to call their own and many more
to charm.

Their home was in a fruitful vale,* in sight of moun-
tain-glen,
All picturesque with hill and dale, within this land
of Penn :
"O, fortunate, O, happy day"—around their own
bright hearth,
They start, on their "harmonious way," celestial
life on earth.

In time, their household numbered three—again, in
due time, four,—
The first, a son, was called for John, a daughter for
'Lenore :
As time rolled on their table grew quite large, from
"round and small"—
They kept on adding leaf to leaf and fruit to fruit,
withal.

Their sons grew up like healthy plants, rejoicing in
their youth,
Their daughters shone like corner-stones in palaces of
truth ;
They shared in all the joys of life, and, as good
Heaven wills,
They kept their vows as man and wife and bravely
shared life's ills.

They never turned a soul in want from that good
homestead-door—
The poor, long after she was gone, still blessed the
kind 'Lenore ;
They lived and prospered long on earth—an hon-
ored life was theirs ;
They died and left less wealth than worth to numer-
ous worthy heirs.

*Cumberland Valley.

Among their scions may be found great men in
church and state—
Not merely great as men of sound—good *deeds*, alone,
make great;
The farmer and the artisan, the soldier and the sage,
And many an honest laboring man of this fast
moving age.

Our christian MOTHERS, whom we boast,—who
trained and train our youth—
A quiet but a mighty host for virtue, love, and
truth;
"Who *was* 'Lenore?" some one may ask,—one line
will answer that—
Ten thousand such as she still live in this old Key-
stone state.

"And who was John?" another asks,—the answer is
the same—
Ten thousand noble sons still live who boast his
name and fame;
Their sons and daughters, multiplied, all over this
broad land,
Against the wrong and for the right, a mighty host
they stand.

Not all the wealth of India's mines could fill the
farmer's place,
And Heaven's smiles are mirrored in the sweat in
Labor's face;
We hail the true man everywhere—who ne'er from
duty swerves—
He is the one right royal heir who rules the land he
serves.

THE PEDDLER.

"BUY braw troggin*"—troggin cheap and new—
"Frae" the jolly peddler, Gentile Turk, or Jew;
Gay was the morning, lucky was the day,
Merry was the evening when he came to stay.

Happy were the lasses, thoughtful was the dame,
Hopeful were the laddies, when the peddler came,
Trog' and trinkets laden, to the homestead-door,
Rustic lad and maiden, in the days of yore.

*Fine goods, wares, etc.

Cunning were his wheedles, o'er his calicos,
German pins and needles, gloves and cotton hose;
Watches, chains, and ribbons, ear and finger-rings,
Pocket-knives and scissors, thimbles and shoe-strings.

Hooks-and-eyes and buttons, gilded, brass or pearl,
Laces and spool-cottons—suit a country-girl;
Watch-seals, keys, and crystals, puzzzle, pencil, toy,
Jews-harps, pocket-pistols—suit a country-boy;

Beads and combs and brushes, breast-pins—"all the go,"
How the maiden blushes—buys one for her beau;
Gallows—eke, suspenders, lacers, corset-boards,
Cushions, needle-cases, fringes, tapes and cords.

Cotton checks for aprons, stuff for baby-clothes,
Specialties for matrons, spec's for eyes and nose;
Almanacs and dream-books, letter-books complete—
How to write a letter—literary feat:

Smelling-saltz in bottles (pistols,* if you please,)
Fired up the nostrils, made a body sneeze;
German pills and tinctures, essence pepper-mint,
Tiny little phials—crimson-colored ink:

Pretty little side-combs, fip'nny-bit a pair,
Greasy little bottles—bears oil for the hair;
Fans and pocket-'kerchiefs, ruffles and rosettes,—
Scolloped capes embroider'd, silks and bobbinets:

Came the old-time peddler, in the days of yore,
With the goods I've numbered, and as many more;
Then, he went, like Atlas, with his mighty load—
Earth on back and shoulders, o'er the rural road.

*Pistol-shaped phials.

Now, all this is altered—Fortune! O, that smile!
Drives a span of horses, Kimball-Jack and style;
Carries cheap "braw troggin" on his back no more—
Business on the corner—legend—"One Price Store."

AN OLD-TIME COURT AND A LAWSUIT.

King Tidrick sent a messager,
Bade him till Olger say:
"Whilk will ye loor, now, stand the stour,
Or to us tribute pay?

Sae grim in mood King Olger grew,
Ill could he thole sic taunts.
"Thou bid them bide us on the bent—
See wha the payment vaunts!
Tribute the Dane to nae man pays,
But dane-gelt a'gate taks;
An' tribute gin ye will hae, ye's hae't
Laid lounding on y'r backs.
—Old Danish Ballads.

IN old Donegal there once lived a man
Who was sick and preparing to die;
His life was reduced to a mere narrow span,
And its end was, apparently, nigh.

Of body quite weak, but of will he was strong,
And so, of his memory and mind;
His possessions—too large to take them along—
He was *willing* to leave them behind.

So he called his descendants around his bed,
And in tremulous accents and tears,
He declared that as soon as he should be dead,
They should have them in equal shares.

The good farmer died and was buried in peace
Amid singing and preaching and prayers;
But when preaching and singing and prayers had ceased,
Came the quarrels among the heirs.

They divided the money, the horses and lands—
To each one his several share,
As *they* understood their good father's commands,
And thought it was all fair and square.

On one of the tracts stood a sweet cherry-tree,
Right on the dividing line:
Said Jimmy, "that cherry-tree falls to me,"
But, said John "that cherry-tree's mine."

"Those cherries are mine," said James to a friend,
And I'll girdle the tree with straw;"
Said John, "every dollar I have will I spend,
But I'll have those cherries by law."

So the quarrel went on from year to year,
While the cherry-tree bloomed and bore;
And the boys and the birds were having good cheer,
While the brothers quarreled on as before.

A neighbor advised them to have the line run,
And that, perhaps, would decide it;
But the surveyor said, when his work was done,
That the tree stood exactly astride it.

The preacher suggested, they share the fruit
As fairly and squarely as might be;
But Jimmy and John swore they'd have a lawsuit,
For that was the best and the right way.

So, the tree and the strife together did grow,
While the robin-redbreasts were merry,
And every whipstitch a catbird would go
And help himself to a ripe cherry.

A Bush-lawyer lived in that neighborhood,
And faithfully followed his labors,
In doing the dirtiest mischief he could
By keeping up strife among neighbors.

It was he who advised an appeal to the law,
For a pimp pettifogger was he;
So he went with Jimmy to lawyer McGaw
Where he knew he'd get part of the fee.

So Jimmy sued John for the sweet cherry-tree
And a bit of a strip of land,
And he paid the big sum of a five dollar fee,
Cash down in the lawyer's hand.

The lawyer felt good and the pimp felt glad,
Just to think of dividing such spoils;
And Jimmy began to think that he had
Brother Johnny within his toils.

Next the Bush-lawyer went with *John* to a 'squire,
And a very wise 'squire was he,
For he told John the best he could do was to hire
Lawyer Michael McDuffel McGee.

So, to Michael McDuffel McGee they went
And gave him a liberal fee;
The fee he kept, but his opinion he spent—
That John owned the land and the tree.

Several years rolled away 'till the trial came on—
'Twas often continued for cause—
Either James wasn't ready, or else it was John—
Oh! the "cussed" delay of the laws.

Sometimes Jim, or John, or a witness was sick—
Or pretended to be, as a reason—
Or some bodycouldn't get over the creek,
Or the time didn't suit to the season.

McGaw, for the plaintiff, in drawing his *narr*,
Used a word he hadn't intended,
So, McGee drew up a demurrer at bar
And filed it for John, the defendant.

McGaw, for the plaintiff, joined in the demurrer,
And they argued the question all day;
They cited the law from Bacon to Burrows,
And the judge held the point c a v.

Meantime the cherry-tree yielded its fruit,
And the birds still lived very high,
And a many an urchin, pending the suit,
Was feasting on sweet cherry-pie.

In due course of law, the court met again,
And the judge, looking wondrously wise,
Decided, and ordered McGaw to amend,
And McGee to allege surprise.

McGaw stood amended, McGee stood surprised,
Whilst the judge looked solemn and sober,
And Jimmy and John were promptly apprised
That the cherry-tree case had "gone over."

So the crier was ordered to make proclamation—
And a loud proclamation it was—
That parties concerned might have information,
That the case was continued for cause:

That the court stood adjourned for a minute or two—
To meet at the handiest inn,
And take a sweet smile with the widow Mulgrew,
Who was "kapin the very best gin."

The judge drank a health to lawyer McGaw,
And McGaw drank a health to McGee;
The judge sent a message to crier McGraw
To adjourn the court *sine die*.

'Twas aboon high moon, in came with a croon,
The ubiquitous old fiddling Joe,
With his elbow a'jink and his fiddle a'tune,
And his rigidly rosin'd bow.

The judge drank a heath to old fiddling Joe,
And Joe drink a health to all hands,
And there he stood with his uplifted bow,
Awaiting their further commands.

The figures were called by crier McGraw,
And Joe played "The Jolly Old Crew,"
And the judge led the dance, according to law,
With his partner, the widow Mulgrew.

They drank and they sang, they fiddled and frolicked,
And they danced on the bar-room floor,
They shifted and shuffled, they reeled and they rollicked,
Till the widow Mulgrew gave o'er.

So, the judge and the jury, the suitors, and all
Were having a very gay time ;
Nor was it, of yore, considered at all,
That to drink, or to dance, was a crime.

Nay, even good preachers, more relax in the skin,
Would indulge in a glass of good wine,
And the elders and deacons (of course they were weak ones,)
Would dance and drink stonefence, by times.

The judge, feeling more than usually good,
Sank the *jura rerum* in the moral,—
Suggested to Jimmy and John that they should
Divide and settle their quarrel.

But Jimmy and John, standing fast on their rights,
The judge's good counsels derided,
And asked his honor into how many bites
A cherry could be divided.

The question proved quite too much for the judge—
He would hold it awhile c a v
And he added, to lawyer McGaw, with a nudge,
"I'll decide that some other day."

Some neighbors talked in, as they thought it but fair—
Said Michael McDuffel McGee,
"Go home with the hatchet and bury it there,
Right under the old cherry-tree."

But did you e'er know a Scotchman to yield
A hair's breadth in any dispute?
No ; rather his life he would yield on the field,
Or his fortune, in fighting a suit.

'Twas the boast of Clan Douglass in days of yore—
"For tribute! O, no, not a cent!
But for battle we'll go a million or more,
And our lives upon that for defense."

So, parties and witnesses started from town,
After many a parting drink,
And a witless wight said, "now that it's down,
When *will* it come up, do you think?"

Then a witless wag, more wise than he,
Said there never was saying truer—
"The law very swift and sharp may be,
But justice, though slow, is sure."

All this took place in the month of June,
When the cherries were ripe and rare;
When the brothers got home the cherries were gone,
But the tree and the land still there.

The haying and harvesting next went on—
While the strife and the suit lay quiet,
Till the next August Term of the court came on,
When the parties got ready to try it.

Meantime, McDuffel McGee filed a plea,
By way of a formal amendment,
To wit: that the said old sweet cherry tree
Stood on the land of defendant.

When the list was called, McGee answered over,
"Your Honor, ther's no replication;"
McGaw, then, replied, (apparently sober)
He would file a new declaration.

So he filed it forthwith, to avoid delay,
But McDuffel McGee objected;
Said McGaw to McGee, that's always your way,
But it's nothing but what I expected."

Then a sharp altercation between them ensued—
A curiously sentinental one—
Their language was rough, their manner was rude,
Yet each called the other "the gentleman."

His honor, observed with a snap and a snarl
And an extra judicial frown,
That McGee had a right, if he chose, to imparl,
And ordered McGaw to sit down.

(It's amusing, in law, what an awkward *faux pas*
Mispleading, sometimes, engenders—
As sure as McGee gets the pull on McGaw,
McGaw pulls up his suspenders.)

So McGee and McGaw had time to imparl—
To see if they could not agree
To settle 'twixt James and John the old quarrel
Concerning the old cherry-tree.

So the case was continued, again, for cause,
And the witnesses wanted their pay,
And wanting it, went, cursing lawyers and laws,
And the law's "infernal delay."

But they all went over to widow Mulgrew's—
Lawyers and clients and all,
And the widow was glad to hear the news,
That the case was continued till fall.

So, they all took a drink because they were dry—
Or expected they soon would be,—
Some brandy, some gin, and some old rye,
And the others took sangaree.

Then they all took a dance, as they did before,
And they got on a de'il of a spree,
As they used to do, in the days of yore,
When fun, fight and frolick were free.

Before all was over the game ran high
With thunder and racket and rattle,
For Jimmy and John concluded to try
And decide it by "wager of battle."

So the case was attached and the trial went on,
And they had some very rough pleading;
And Mrs. Mulgrew cried, "McDuff, lay on!
There, Jimmy, your nose is a bleedin'!"

A "domestic attachment," surely, it was—
A case betwixt brother and brother,
But the judge interfered and objected, because,
For that each was "embracing" the other.

They pulled and they hauled, they pummeled and
malled,
And finally got on the floor,
Where they struggled and scratched 'till somebody
called
All hands to the bar, once more:

And as you may think, all hands took a drink,
And Jimmy and John drank along;
And Joe, with a wink and his elbow a'jink,
Played a tune and sang them a song.

And, as a last chance, all joined in the dance
To the tune of "The Jolly Old Crew,"
And the judge with a glance, and a graceful advance,—
Took the floor with the widow Mulgrew.

When the dance was over they went their way,
But some of the witnesses swore,
That before next court they would have their pay,
Or they wouldn't 'tend court any more.

The cherries were over, the apples were ripe,
And corn-topping time was near,
And the young folk reveled in rural delight,
As they did in the fall of the year.

There were oats to be threshed from stack or mow,
And clover-seed yet to be mown,
Manure to be hauled and fields to plow,—
To be plowed and harrowed and sown.

There was corn to be topped and cider made,—
And apples to be pared and cored,
Butter to be boiled by matron and maid',
And fruits to be gathered and stored.

In the midst of it all the constable came—
In fact, they had heard the report—
He was coming to summon each witness again,
To attend at the August Court.

Some said they would never attend again—
For the case would never come up;
They told Jim and John it was all in vain,
But they swore they'd never give up.

In ten days from that they all went to town,
And put up at the widow Mulgrew's,
Where Jimmy and John treated round upon round
And "divil" a drink was refused.

They drank and they talked, they chewed and they smoked,
And they spat all over the floors,
Till wainscoatings, walls, and floor were soaked,
Then spat out of windows and doors.

The topic of talk was the cherry-tree-case,
And how it was likely to go;
Some thought that the trial would never take place,
As counsel and court were so slow.

The court-house-bell was ringing quite slow,
And the dogs chimed in with their howls;
Three judges got on the bench, in a row,
All looking as gravely as owls.

An associate "owl" sat on either side
And played the chief owl second fiddle—
What a picture of dignity, wisdom, and pride,
With the president owl in the middle!

The first to stand up was crier McGraw,
And as, in such case, is provided,
He opened the court according to law
And, according to law, he subsided.

A fierce looking man was crier McGraw,
When he stood up to open the court,
Stentorian his voice, immense his jaw,
But sublime his personal port.

"O, yea ! O, yea ! O, yea !" was his cry—
Three times he repeated that word—
"All ye who have here any business, draw nigh,
Attend, and your pleas shall be heard."

He closed with a prayer for the state and the court,
That God would both save and defend;
'Twas a prayer of that perfunctory sort,
And ne'er an *Amen* to the end.

The lawyers strolled leisurely into the court
With their briefs in their dirty green bags;
Some merely strolled in as a matter of course,
While others were real old prags.

The court-room was crowded above and below,
And tobacco juice freely was pouring,
And in the huge, old fashioned "Pine Grove" stoves,
The old-fashioned fires were roaring.

The president judge, with gavel in hand,
Was pounding his desk with violence,
While all the tipstaves, with an air of command,
Were noisily calling for "*si*lence!"

When silence arrived, the business began,
And moved on with courtly precision—
The first thing in order—the judge had on hand
Was a very important decision.

A very elab'rate opinion he read
On the very grave question, O, *very;*
And it came very near to splitting his head—
How *many* bites were in a cherry?

This very grave question had puzzled lord Bacon,
And *many* a law-learnéd forum;
And therefore, that *he* might not be mistaken,
He had held it "*curia vult advisorum.*"*

(He read his opinion and filed it away,
Where all such grave papers were placed,
And there to remain till the clerks, some day,
Might need such *material for waste.*)

His Honor, of course, wore a fine ruffled shirt—
Looking dignified, grave, and determined,
But as sure as he opened his mouth he would spirt
Some cavendish-juice on the ermine.

There was counselor Rake had a motion to make
And also to ask for a rule, sir,
And counselor Cake had a judgment to take
For default, against Dennis O'Toole, sir.

There was very much current business to do—
Each lawyer, of course, had a motion,
And, eke, not a few were running them through
At the speed of a physical potion.

And just about noon, the court had a "boom"—
A call from one of its members—
And hastened at once to a little side-room
To dispose of a "motion at chambers."

And when it returned it was time to adjourn,
And the crier made proclamation—
That the court stood adjourned till half past one,
For refreshments and recreation.

*Hog Latin.

According to that the court met again,
And was opened, forthwith, by the crier;
The tipstaves all shouting "silence!" in vain,
And the janitor stirred up the fire.

The clerk called the jury-list, name by name—
Those present all answered the call,
And the rest he called over and over again,
But *they* didn't answer at all.

The very first case called was Doe vs. Roe,
And the next case was Jim vs. John;
But Doe vs. Roe was a going so slow,
There was poor chance for Jim vs. John.

When Doe vs. Roe was on trial four days
Without being more than half through,
The law's proverbial doubts and delays
Were making things look rather blue;

So Jim vs. John would hardly come on—
Nor to speed, was his Honor inclined;
So, on Friday, the case of Jim vs. John
Was continued for want of time.

So the cherry-tree case did not come on,
And they all went to Mrs. Mulgrew's—
Parties and witnesses, singing the song,—
"John Barleycorn's good for the blues."

McGee drank a health to lawyer McGaw
And McGaw drank a health to McGee
And they all got drunk according to law—
When fun, fight and frolic were free.

And behind the door sat old fiddling Joe,
With his fiddle upon his knee,
All ready to rosin and make it go
For a sup of o' the old barley-bree.

And, just as before, on the bar-room floor,
They fiddled and danced all the day—
Yea, just as they did in the days of yore,
When that was the merry old way.

And the widow, by-times, joined in the dance
With lawyer McGaw or McGee—
The judge, this time, having missed his chance,
For, in court on the bench was he.

When Joe's old tunes were about played out,
They asked him to play something new;
So, Joe, to oblige them, and help himself out,
Just played them "The Jolly Old Crew."

And Jimmy and John, they, footed the bill
For witnesses, lawyers, and all,
For lawyers and witnesses had their fill
Of the bliss of a bar-room ball.

And after all hands drank several rounds—
Each side "to the old cherry-tree,"
They all saddled up and—homeward bound,
As merry as mortals could be.

And so it kept going from court to court,
And, indeed, from year unto year—
The lawyers and witnesses having their sport,
And any amount of good cheer.

Though, after some years, the case was tried,
But the jury could not agree—
They told his Honor, they could never decide
Whether Jimmy or John owned the tree.

One side, they all said, had sworn one way,
And the other side just the other;
This being the case how *could* they say,
Or decide betwixt brother and brother?

But the judge sent the jury back to their room
To be kept till they should agree—
Without food, light or fire, till the crack of doom—
Whether Jimmy or John owned the tree.

And there they were kept three days and three nights,
Like Jonah inside of the whale;
When they begg'd the judge for food, fire, or light,
He threaten'd to send them to jail.

He adjourned once more to the widow Mulgrew's
Just to have a wee bit of a spree;
And he told the clerk to bring him the news,
In case that they should agree.

They "smiled" and they smoked o'er their barley-bree,
While the jury might starve or freeze;
And each took a pinch of the widow's Rappee,—
And thereupon all took a sneeze.

Some played seven-up till the sun was low,
Some danced to the Jolly Old Crew—
The merriest tune that was played by Joe
At the house of the widow Mulgrew.

So all things were done according to law—
And custom was *good* law, of yore,
But the "good old ways" of by gone days,
Are custom and law no more.

Sometimes they played and sometimes they fought—
And other like innocent sports;
And if they "got licked" they took what they got,
And never appealed to the courts.

And so it went on from day to day,
But the jury were still "at sea;"
When the court met again, the clerk rose to say
That the jury would never agree.

They came from their room and got in their box—
So weak they were hardly able—
The judge rapt for silence with many hard knocks
On his desk, with his iron-wood gavel.

When silence was had, the clerk rose and said,
"Well gentlemen, have you agreed—?"
The foreman, for answer, then shook his head,—
To shake theirs, the rest didn't need.

McGaw moved the court the jury be polled—
As he was determined to see;—
When polled they agreed that by hunger and cold
They could never be made to agree.

The judge saw the point and discharged them with thanks
For the manner in which they behaved;
And the jury returned the judge *their* thanks—
But their pay and some victuals they craved.

Thus ended one trial of Jim against John—
In the manner already said;
And often, before another came on,
The cherries were rare ripe and red.

The cherry-tree bore and ripened its fruit,
And the fruit was so fair and good;
Not so with the fruit of the cherry-tree suit
For that was corruption of blood.

The brothers lawed on till their money was gone,—
And their lands were covered with liens
To secure the money their neighbors had loaned—
And withal, they were short of means.

The sheriff, at last, sold the land in suit
To pay neighbor Goodheart's demand;
So neighbor Goodheart, to end the dispute,
Kindly bid on and purchased the land.

"I'll purchase the land for Jimmy," said he—
(For, as that of John it was sold—)
Thus, vesting in James, the sweet-cherry-tree—
Provided the title would hold.

Not long after that the sheriff got Jim
And levied *his* part of the land;
Says neighbor Goodheart "I'll just buy it in,
And have it all at my command."

But neighbor Goodheart kept it all for himself,
For a very good bargain had he;
So, the greedy old grasping, miserely elf,
Had the land and the sweet-cherry-tree.

Both Jimmy and John sued neighbor Goodheart
For a breach of resulting trust;
But alas! alas! it took all to start—
Their suit, died for want of "the dust."

They rented the lands from neighbor Goodheart—
To farm-their own lands—on the shares;
The landlord receiving the lion's part,
And the tenants the leavin's for theirs.

And *so* things went on for several years—
The landlord exacting still more,—
'Till wives and children, in tatters and tears,
Encountered the wolf at the door!

The constables came and levied their goods
And chattels, and sold them for debts;
Alas! for the wife who o'er misery broods,—
Whose portion are tears and regrets.

Though they labored, they lived from hand to mouth—
Only changing from bad to worse—
Till, as wretched they were as the slaves in the South,
In the dark days of slavery's curse.

Jonn took to the bottle and Jim to the barrel—
O, helpless and hopeless resorts!
John Barleycorn, now, but inflamed the quarrel,
Till it went to the criminal courts.

There John was called up and sentenced to jail,
For his case against Jim was lost,
And Jim would have gone, if he dadn't got bail,
In his against John—for the cost.

They drank and they quarreled and lawed for years,
Until friends, lands and money were gone—
And chattels distrained for rent in arrears,
And their wives' little trinkets were pawned.

Still, the cherry-tree bloomed and bore its good fruit,
And neighbor Goodheart got the whole,—
Except what the birds took, still pending the suit,
In spite of scare-crow on the pole.

* * * * *

One morning John hung to a limb of that tree!
From another, close by, hung his brother!
They buried poor Jim one side of the tree,
And John close by on the other.

In sight of that tree was the family grave-yard—
Of all God's good acres the best—
But the *felo-de-ses* were denied, though hard,
Within it, the last boon of rest.

Thus ended their strife, for land and for tree—
Their hatred, their envy and malice;
On one thing, alone, they at last could agree
To hold as in common—their gallows.

The lore of the legend remains to be told—
As I heard it, so here let me give it,
'Tis one of the local traditions they hold,
Who tell it, and telling, believe it.

And this is the lore of the legend they tell—
"Three days from this sad suicide,
The leaves of the cherry-tree wilted and fell,
And the tree, itself, sickned and died!

No man laid an axe to the root of that tree,
But allowed it to stand as a warning
Of the fate of the misguided *felo-de-ses*
And their widows and orphans, still mourning.

Young trees grew up from its roots and they bore,
But by some mysterious power—
Runs this curious legend of days of yore—
All the cherries they bore were sour:

That the roots of the tree had sprouted again—
Over which Jim and John had contended—
And that from all it was perfectly plain,
All sour cherry-trees had descended.

From the day the brothers were seen hanging there
The birds ceased to visit the tree;
Instead of their songs their cries filled the air,
Like the curlew's wild wail by the sea.

No grass ever grew nor flower e'er bloomed
On the grave of the *felo-de-se*,
For the soil that rests on him is cursed and doomed
To be barren and sterile for aye.

In the darkness of night was seen a dim light,
And the voices of men might be heard—
As, of brothers engaged in a quarrel or fight,
And you caught, now and then, but a word:

Such as "cherry-tree—line, justice, and law,
Costs, fees, fine, McGaw and McGee;
Gin, Port, sang—McGee and McGaw,
Spent all, sangaree, d—mn the tree!"

"Judge, Joe, jury, barley-bree;
Widow Mulgrew, Jolly Old Crew—
Lay on McDuff! give 'm enough!
—— Jim! John! now, lay on!"

Then *a sulphurous smell, as if from hell*—
Then darkness and silence again.

All this was ordain'd—before Adam's fall—
Runs the legend the Knoxites tell—
Who live in the land called old Donegal,
And believe less in heaven than hell.

They believe much more in hell than in heaven—
(It's "by hell" they usually swear)—
Their hearts are imbued with the Pharisee's leaven,
Of which, let good christians beware.

Thank God for more light, though it be but a gleam—
For *less* hell in the faith of our day—
That the bright star of hope sheds e'en a faint beam
O'er the grave of the *felo-de-se*.

The lore of the legend may be what it will—
Of the fate of the litigant brothers,
Their orphans were cared for and comforted, still,
By the Lord and their heroic mothers.

Though widowed, heart-broken, and so very poor,
That death would have seemed a relief,
Each, trusting in God, resolved to endure,
And to *do*, though she died in her grief.

By the will of the Lord, their helper, always,
Upon whom they ever depended—
From the seed of the hapless *felo-de-ses*
Good women and men have descended.

Was this, too, ordained before Adam's fall?
Could the heart of a Knoxite conceive it?
Though 'twere told by an angel in old Donegal,
A Knoxite would hardly believe it.

JOHN* GOES WEST.†

"And now I'm in the world alone"—
And O! the world is wide—
"But why should I for others groan
When none for me have sighed!
Perchance my dog will whine in vain,
Till fed by stranger hands,
But long ere I come back again
He'd tear me where he stands."

But no, my faithful dog, not so
Would I fare at his hands,
Though I o'er land and sea should go
And die in foreign lands,
Still, he, my lone, sad fate would share—
My faithful dog, and brave—
Would seek and find me even there,
And die upon my grave.

THERE was a sick swain in the gay olden time
When young men were given to roam
In search of new pleasures in far distant climes,
When weary of serving at home.

He had stayed on the farm long enough, he said,
And worked for his victuals and clothes,
So westward he, now, would turn his "own" head,
And go,—where the young man goes.

His parents and brothers and sisters were sad
To hear of his going away;
He owned that, perhaps, he would wish that he had,
But longer he would not say.

He was now of full age, and go west he would—
For, when of age young folks are free—
For weal or for wo, for evil or good,
The West and the world he would see.

*John Smith.
†In the rude parlance of the times, "out back."

So when it was found that to go, he was bound,
He was furnished a new freedom-suit,
And a sum of hard money, in cash paid down,
And a pair of new boots, to boot.

And this was not all—O, no, not at all—
But a new silver watch beside,
With a slide and a seal and a ribbon, withal,
And a splendid young horse to ride.

E'en this was not all, nor even, the best,
But a saddlebags stuffed full of clothes,
Such as pants, overalls, some shirts and a vest,
And some knee-high, home-knit, woolen hose ;

A good darning-needle, some nice woolen yarn,
Some hanks of strong thread made of flax,
To sew on a button, his stockings to darn,—
An assortment of needles in packs.

His umbrella done up in a calico case,
And his big coat heavily lined,
Together rolled up and buckled and braced
To his saddle-pad, deftly, behind.

Though his mother's heart ached, some light-cakes she baked,
And of lunch, she had made up a load,
Which, in tears, as she spake, she bade him to take
In his pockets, to eat on the road.

And to guard against ills, such as fever and chills,
The headache, bad liver and blood,
A box of Dutch pills, to cure all those ills
That are caused by strange water or food.

All these were provided by a mother's kind hand,
And a neat pocket-Bible, quite new,
And all for his comfort and welfare she planned,
As only a MOTHER can do.

What more did they do? they hung a horse-shoe
O'er the gate-way that led to the lane—
O'er the gate he'd pass through with a final adieu
To the homestead, for aye to remain.

'Twas one of the ways in those old fashioned days
When a youth went a journey to stay,
That a group of his friends an escort would raise
And go with him part of the way.

To the end of the lane at the public highway,
Where the old oaken monarchs still stood,
And there, 'neath their boughs they parted that day,
As the farewells rang sad through the wood.

Thus parted—*they*, going their way back home,
And *he* to turn back, half inclined,
His heart half way up his throat seemed to come,
While casting sad glances behind.

When over the first hill and down in the hollow,
His horse seemed unwilling to go,
And he saw that old Tauser was trying to follow
And instinctively seemed to know

That his master was leaving his home for aye—
That he never might see him more,—
And before him across the way he lay,
And a dogged sad look he wore.

"O, Tauser! go back, go home," said the swain,
"You cannot go with me this time—
For I never expect to return home again"—
And Tauser set up a sad whine.

And he kept his position across the highway—
Not budging an inch from his place—
And he looked up as though he had volumes to say—
As he looked in his master's sad face.

His master dismounted and stood on the ground
And threatened poor "Taus." with his whip,
And as he looked 'round to his sorrow he found,
Slyly creeping along, little "Tip."

He thought of the omens, the legends and lore
He had learned in his happy old home,
And he said to himself, "back home, O, once more,
And I'd never more wish to roam."

Too late to turn back, and for honor he couldn't,
And his anger rose rank in his breast;
Too late to turn back, and for shame's sake he wouldn't,
And for weal or for wo, he'd go west.

The dogs still clung to him, they whined, fawned, and licked,
But the turn in affairs, now had come;
The poor, friendly dogs, he whipped, cuffed and kicked,
Until yelping, they scampered back home.

In his saddle again, he took up his way,
All alone through the beautiful vale,
But slow was the gait of his trusty young bay—
As the gait of the galloping snail.

As he climbed to the top of the opposite hill
In the rays of the bright morning sun,
His feelings almost overruled his strong will,
Though his journey was scarce, yet, begun.

From the hill-top he saw the homestead arise
Once more, to his lingering view,
And he bowed his head low, as with tear-moisten'd eyes,
He waved it a last, fond, adieu.

He gazed o'er the landscape as it stretched far and wide—
O'er the meadows, the fields and the wood,
And he felt, now, as though he could ever abide
In a country so lovely and good.

But his will said the turn of the tide had come,
And take it, he must, at the flow;—
That his fortune was not to be made here, at home,
And westward, ho, westward, he'd go.

The church and the school-house he next had to pass—
The church where he'd wept, sung, and prayed—
The school-house where, oft' he made love to his lass,
And the play-ground where oft' he had played.

And what, further on, at the foot of the hill,
Where the clear waters sparkle and gleam?
There stood the old mill—the old stone mill,
And the bridge o'er the rippling stream.

As he wished, so he passed them, unheard and unseen
By the miller, his wife, or his maid,
But his horse, as accustomed so long he had been,
Had inclined toward the post in the shade.

Where so oft' and so patiently waiting, he'd stood,
For the grist he had brought to be ground;
Then, with John on the sack, in a half dreamy mood,
His winding way homeward had wound.

And next came the smithy, the ding of the anvil,
In the slab-covered smithy of yore—
The dingy old smithy, the ring of the mandrel—
Should he hear them and see them no more?

At the smithy, his "Barney"—for so he was named—
Went, sideling, right up to the post,
And the smith and some patrons, in wonder, exclaimed,
"Why John! is this you, or your ghost?"

His answer was short, and his words but few,
And this was, say, what they expressed—
"Quick, lest I should rue, examine each shoe,
For I'm bound for the far, far, West."

So done; and away went John that day,
Though the *birds* seemed to sing, "don't go!"
But he heeded them not and he hied him away
Toward the land of the O-hi-o!*

But Barney was lag, though a nimble young nag,
And he whinnied, and halted and neighed,
And his course at times, was rather zig-zag,
And at length he began to jade.

John was now well on the great thoroughfare,
From the river—it had been thought fit
To name to the honor of Lord *de la Ware*—
To the city that smokes to Lord Pitt.†

*i. e., the beautiful.

†"To whom Parliamentary government owes everything, but Art and Literature nothing."

And as the North mountain stood, frowning before
him—
The first of that great northern range,—
A still deeper feeling of sadness came o'er him,
And all, e'en his own heart, seemed strange.

He stopped for a moment, and so did his breath,
While he gazed upon Parnel's blue knob,*—
And all the world round him was silent as death,
But, within him, he heard his heart throb.

Though at first sight, so grim seemed the frown of
the mountain,
His thoughts and his musings thus ran—
"There is something in height and in depth that's
the fountain
Of much that is noble in man."

From an urchin, come trudging along with his
cows,—
Our traveler now, made up his mind—
To ask, how far to the next public house,
Where a stranger good lodging might find.

"Four miles, sir," said he, "in the next little town—
Can tell you the place, to the spot—
On the left hand side—very best to be found,
And it's kept by Mr. Thom. Scott."†

The sun had gone down behind the blue hills,
And as their dark shadows fell o'er him,
John thought and he wished, as he felt their cold
chills,
That a wish to his home could restore him.

*Four miles east of Loudon.
†Father to the late Thos. A. Scott. of Rail Road fame.

But he quickened the pace of his horse, once more,—
For, his horse, though never a racer—
A fact, that, perhaps, I should have stated before,
Was, nevertheless, a good pacer.

At such a good gait, John was getting along,
Much pleased with the land and its tillage,—
So beguiled with his thoughts, it was not very long
Till he came in sight of the village.[52]

O, the village in sight, to the way-weary wight—
To the stranger, when sad, lone, and lorn!
Ah, how does he welcome the soft shades of night—
The pilgrim, when weary and worn!

And even his horse—if on horseback he go—
Instinctively takes to an inn;
For an inn, e'en a sensible horse seems to know,
Though it be one he never has seen.

At the inn, John and bay, at the close of the day—
The horse and his rider safe there—
John soon felt concerned as to what he should pay,
And how he and Barney should fare.

The great open yard around the old inn,
Was crowded with teams, to the door,
And from each direction were still coming in,
At the least, some three or four more.

The wag'ners were busy as wag'ners could be—
Getting things in ship-shape for the night;
John went to the stable with the hostler, to see
That his bay's bed and board were all right.

The bar-room was crowded as full as the yard—
Not with teams, but teeming with men—
Some smoking, some chewing, and some playing cards,
Some taking a drink, now and then.

John kept a back seat until supper was called,
When a teamster, observing him, said:
"Step up my young friend, 'twont hurt you at all—
Take a little to level your head."

John politely declined, having made up his mind
That as long as he didn't get sick,
He'd drink nothing strong, of whatever kind,
And to that resolution he'd stick.

The landlord observed, as a true man would do—
And a true man I knew him to be[53]—
If that is your vow, keep your face to the plow,
And step out to supper with me.

So humble a guest couldn't help but feel honored,
As he stept with his host through the hall,
While the teamster was left, and felt himself cornered—
Half ashamed of his conduct, withal.

"Where Fergusson sits is the head o' the table"—
And there sat the noble old Scott;
On his right the young stranger, escaped from the danger,
While the tempter was set down for naught.

The talk of the wag'ners was wagoners' talk—
In keeping, of course, with their calling—
Of the horse that would pull, or the horse that would balk,
And the kind of a load each was hauling.

The talk of the host with his young stranger guest,
To whom such respect he was showing,
Was—where he hailed from, why bound for the West,
And, as to what part he was going.—

O, had I the skill of a Hogarth or Leech,
A Cruikshank, a Nast, or Gillray,
I would here paint a picture, to life, true of each—
Of the inn, host, and guests of that day;

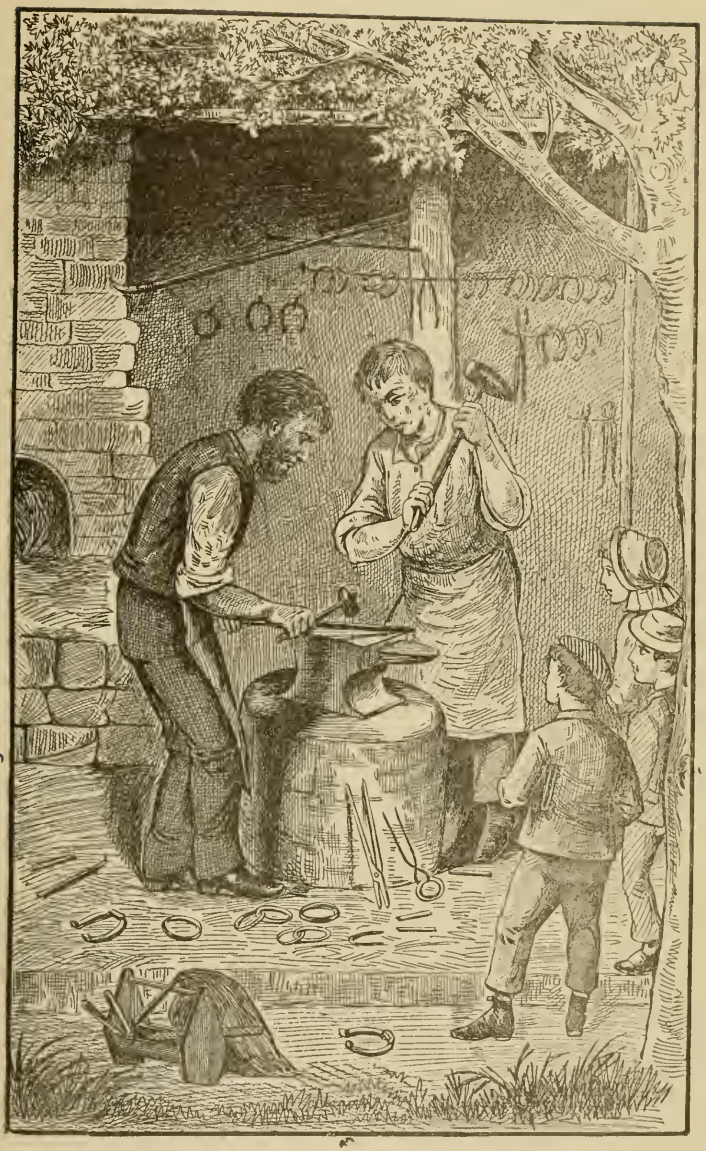
Of the wealth of good fare that the way-farer shared
At the inn of the turnpike, lang syne;
Of the good bed and board the inn could afford,
When the turnpike was still the great line.

But a bar-room afforded but little to cheer
A rustic so modest as John;
The landlord, then, showed him to a room in the rear,
Where the young folk were having their fun.

It was like an infare, (of which more, elsewhere,
In our journeys and tales, all along;)
O, the faces so fair, the swains debonair,
The fiddle, the dance, and the song.

But of all this our John was a mere looker-on,
For his heart and his thoughts were not there;
And as early as when the clock struck ten,
He was climbing the old-time stair;

All slippered and groomed and tallow-dip lighted
By the hostler, up to his lone room,
Where he read and he said, and got in his bed
In the darkness, the silence and gloom;



Yet, at times, he half heard a laugh or a word
From the bar-room, or ball-room, below;
But cares soon forsook him and gentle sleep took him
To the land where the weary ones go.

Nor did he return till the bright morning-sun
Sent a ray of soft light to his pillow,
And the robin-redbreast sang "going, going west,"
From the top of an old weeping willow.

His toilet soon made and his matins soon said,
And his bright, shining boots at the door,
He thought, as he donned them, and as he looked on them,
That he ne'er was so honored before.

He breakfasted late—'twixt seven and eight,—
With the hostess, the host, and the fair;
And he blushed just because, so unworthy he was
Of honors so many and rare.

And none save a mother, or sister, no other,
Could have acted so noble a part;
And John would have tarried, but going, he carried
The remembrance thereof in his heart.

Bill settled and paid, his horse, waiting, neighed,
Impatient he seemed for the trip;
But alack-a-day, he went the wrong way,
And John had to use spurs and whip.

He walked and he balked, he sidled and backed,
And he backed, like a stubborn beast;
In spite of all tackt he would take the back track—
Determined to turn toward the East.

Now, John felt embarrassed and Barney was harassed—
Perhaps hostler Jo' hadn't fed him—
But to make him go west, hostler Jo' did his best,
And he promptly stept forward and led him.

(He was hankering for home—e'en the horse loves his home,
And his equine associations;
Dog and cat love home, as a Roman loves Rome,
And their canine and feline relations.)

Though John hadn't meant to be niggardly, no—
Not a gallant like he, not a whit;
But fearful that he might seem to be so,
Gave the hostler a fip-penny-bit.*

The pleasant surprise, dilated Joe's eyes,
And the horse looking bright as a bird;
Jo' bowed and smiled and through means more mild
Barney moved gently on, at a word.

When well up the mountain,† near a rock-sheltered fountain,
His horse stopped and stood, as if charmed!
He had never been known to behave so before,
And his master became quite alarmed.

Unaccustomed to snakes, it's a risk that one takes
To fight them or keep them at bay;
And so thought lone John, as, there, he saw one
Stretched before him across the highway.

'Twas as black‡ as a crow, and he heard the snake blow—
Head erect and a 'wriggle its tail;
John wished for his gun, as it basked in the sun,
With a length quite as long as a rail.

*6¼ cts—Spanish coin.
†The Kittatinny, or North mountain.
‡Coluber Alleghaniensis, or American black snake.

As he carried no pistol, he tried his whip-whistle,
But that, like his horse, wouldn't go;
So he sat and he gazed, quite alarmed and amazed,
While the charm, with the snake, seemed to grow.

Another bad omen—the tempter of woman,
Through whom came the dread fall of man;
The serpentine devil, with whom all the evil
That curses the earth, first began:

Who ruined old Paradise by feignings and wicked lies,
At the dawn of the primitive day,
Now hinders our hero in search for a new one,
By, thus, lying across his way.

And, within sight and hearing, two men in a clearing—
In underbrush over their knees—
With hoop-poles and rakes were clearing out snakes,
Before they could clear off the trees.[54]

All over the ground the snakes gathered round,
And a dimness stole over John's eyes;
While from trees and from bushes the cat-birds and thrushes
Were filling the air with their cries.

And lo, all around him, a noise that spell-bound him—
The serpentine sirens were there—
His horse motioned not, spell-bound to the spot,
And erect, upon end, every hair.

Was this Mount Parnassus? No; his horse turned Pegasus,
And he felt himself gently arise;
And rising, caught glimpses of the distant Olympus,*
While soaring away toward the skies.

*The Highest Peak of the Alleghenies.

Still westward he steered, although the winds veered,
And he, yet, cast a sad look behind—
O'er his dear native vale, from which, this wild sail,
Perchance, ne'er a better to find.

And, as westward he soared, he sang and he poured—
How sadly, no mortal can tell—
To the land of his birth,—still the fairest on earth—
Yet one more, fond, final farewell.

"Adieu, adieu, my native land—
To thee a last adieu—
I waive to thee a parting hand,
For lands more fair and new."

"O'er mountain, hill and field and stream
I see the enchanted vale,
But westward, ho! as in a dream,
Or driven by the gale."

"High over teams and stage we go—
O'er crawling snake and snail—
Still westward, ho! still westward ho!
We should have had the mail!"

"Let teams and stages creep along
The devious mountain side,
E'en swifter than John Gilpin, on
My wingéd horse I ride."

"Blow, blow, ye winds, from eastern shores—
O'er old Atlantic's flood—
Ill is the wind—the rain that pours
The west-bound wight no good."

"My faithful, O, my trusty steed,
Keep steady on the wing,
To westward, still, keep up thy speed,
But heed me while I sing."

"The East and home may be the best
For Age to stay and die,
But Youth, to live, must seek the West—
Such youths as you and I."

"There lands are rich, there lands are cheap—
They're *given* away, not sold;
There farmers, though they sow not, reap,
Yea' reap an hundred fold."

"As if by magic, cities rise,
And towns spring from the ground;
There gain upon the surface lies,
And wealth, unsought, is found."

"To sunset stretch those fertile lands
In acres, yet, untold;
There rivers flow o'er beds of sands,
And all their sands are gold."

"And true are all these wondrous tales—
Yea, true, and even more;
Of golden wealth are hills and dales—
Exhaustless is the store."

"It's blarney," quoth Barney, "the half of it's gush,
Have a care where we make our litters;
A bird in the hand 's worth two in the bush,
And *all* isn't gold that glitters."

"Yea, true are all those wondrous things,
Though sounding fabulous,
There kingless kingdoms sigh for kings,
And empires wait for us."

"Then fare thee well, fair native land—
My native home, adieu;
I waive to thee a parting hand,
For lands more fair and new."

It was one of those days when the sky seems ablaze,
But the air seems to whisper of rain;
And the mists of the morning had given due warning,
As, in curtains, they hung o'er the plain.

As the sun sank to rest, clouds rose in the West,
Portentous of storm, rain and hail;
Towering high stood one cloud, and the thunders grew loud,
And eastward came sweeping the gale.

As the cloud towered higher, it seemed riven by fire,
And spreading, flashed flash upon flash;
Soon the rain torrents poured and the deep thunders roared,
Or they broke into crash upon crash.

So ended the day, mid the lightning's sharp play,
And deep, dark, and black grew the night;
While the flash from the cloud on the hail-strewn road,
Was the lone traveler's pale, ghastly light.

Through the lightning's pale gleam, came the glimpse of a stream,
At the foot of the hill, in the distance;
And a covered bridge spanned it—if correctly he scanned it—
As the mad torrents swept all resistance.

At the door of an inn, just west of the stream,
As late as, say, nine o' the clock,
On that terrible night, in a sorrowful plight,
Was heard a lone traveler's knock.

Above the low din, a voice from within
Was heard to respond, rather queer—
"Come in if you have it, stay out if you haven't,
For we don't keep stragglers here."

He trembled all o'er, as he opened the door—
In quest of the host and the groom;
A ponderous old door, and a legend it bore—
This legend of yore—"Bar-Room."

It led from a hall through a wainscoted wall—
A partition 'twixt a room and a hall—
And alas! what a sight—a tallow-dip-light
Cast a wild, ghastly glare over all.

Around a rude table our traveler was able
To descry a rough party at cards;
And, in still deeper gloom sat the host and the groom
In the fumes of *un*common* cigars.

From the mouths of the crowd came oaths deep and loud,
And disputes hot and high, o'er the game;
Repartees and sharp passes over half-emptied glasses,
And epithets not to be named,

Save merely to tell that the favorite ones, "hell,"
The "devil," and, indeed, every face,
To inquiry heedless, surely made it quite needless
To inquire the *name* of the place.

*Worse than common.

John kept his position, to await recognition,—
His hand, still at rest on the door—
Till the landlord arose, and through his red nose
He inquiringly cursed and he swore.

Both hungry and tired, the traveler inquired—
Though much less of choice than of force—
For supper and lodging, though the host seemed to dodge him,
And stabling and feed for his horse.

"Your 'orse!" exclaimed podgy, "and supper and lodgin,
An stablin' an corn, hoats an 'ay!
And where is your 'orse?" "On the outside, of course,"
Said John, "and I'm able to pay."

The innocent boast smoothed the style of the host,
And he cursed up the half-sleeping groom—
Like a slave-driving boss—"put away that oss—
Give 'm beddin' an 'ay and some hoats."

The dusky old groom stalked forth from the room
With a holy old lantern, and light
Through the openings beaming, over objects gleaming,
And their shadows distorting, outright.

A sense of great danger prevented the stranger,—
To decide he was hardly able,
As to safety or danger, twixt the bed and the manger—
A bed in the house or the stable.

Meantime, all the topers, the gamblers and poachers,
Had surrendered to general thirst;
And, with pipe or cigar, each stood at the bar,
To drink, and to curse, and be cursed.

From the streams and the bogs came the voices of frogs,
As if calling "more rum, more rum;"
But that was a dream, 'twas the name of a stream—
"Bloody Run! Bloody Run! Bloody Run!"

The ceilings were low and black, from the slow,
But, the ever ascending roll
Of pitch-pine-smoke, or, from burning oak,
Or the fumes from bituminous coal.

And dark were the walls of bar-room and halls,
Nor relieved by a picture, or glass;
Of such, all were bare, nor a portrait was there
Of Clay, Van Burn, nor Cass.*

Some antlers there were, a boar's head, a bear's,
Some guns, and some cavalry-swords
Were standing in nooks, or hanging from hooks—
Wooden hooks—'gainst the old dingy boards.†

On a quaint old stand, quite near at hand,
But aside from the dread, drunken revel,
There lay a small book, which John mistook—
'Twas "The History of Satan, The Devil."

When the broil reached its height, two joined in a fight,
And so cruelly one beat the other—
His face and his head,—'twas thought he was dead;—
John trembled and thought "here's a murther!"

Still, around the rude hearth ran a wild, fiendish mirth—
Could mortals sink lower? alas!
For infamous air and an infernal glare,
Hell, alone, the scene could surpass!

*The landlord was, (as yet,) an unnaturalized Englishman.
†Partitions.

O, had I the skill of a Hogarth or Nast,
A Cruikshank, a Leech, or Gillray,
I would here paint a sketch of the *worst* of the past—
Of the bar-room scenes of that day.

Such was the scene here, that John full of fear,
Felt alarmed for himself and his horse ;
As he looked through the gloam, he thought of his home,
And was moved almost to remorse.

While, thus, he was thinking, the roughs were still drinking,
And he thought of the wormwood and gall ;
But soon he rejoiced, for, in a soft, sweet voice,
To his supper, he now, heard the call.

On his half-tearful eyes, broke a happy surprise—
Like passing from hades to heaven—
To pass from that bar to a room in the rear,
Where the evening repast was given.

He was shown to a seat by a maid fair and neat,
Who attended and waited upon him ;
And by her sweet glances and modest advances,
She, soon, had more than half won him.

Less in words than in eyes the love-charm lies,—
More in looks than in words, the true token ;
O, the pledges of love we receive from above—
From the stars—so true, yet, unspoken.

Through a side-door there came a motherly dame
And sat in a quaint rocking-chair ;
But while so sitting, engaged at her knitting,
Seemed to sigh over trouble or care.

How often, alas, it cometh to pass,
That, aside from their cares for the morrows,
Most faithful mothers, through the faults of others,
Sigh deep o'er their every-day sorrows.

But a step more, apart, sat two buxom sweethearts,
And each had her partner, or beau;
A party of whisters, all talking in whispers,
Or words confidential and low.

Or, just as well say,—for the sake of word-play,
A game of more personal parts;
Or, what is the same, a lovelier game,
In which all the trumps played were hearts.

Though truly polite, John's keen appetite
Induced him to eat rather hearty;
And then, by request, the young stranger-guest
Freely joined the gay evening-party.

In due time the dame withdrew from the scene,
But she left her best wishes for John,
And urged him to call and stay there again,
In case he should ever return.

For all which he thanked her, in his ill-disguised hanker
For the girl, who had just been so kind;
And he promised he would, if ever he should,
But to *stay* west, had made up his mind.

As he spoke of the West, the dame seemed distressed,
And tears gathered fast in her eyes,
And she sobbed, "in the West, somewhere in the West,
The body of our only son lies!"

And she thought that John looked so much like her
son,
That she'd like—if he had it to spare—
And she wheedled and coaxed until she had hoaxed
Him out of a lock of his hair.

At half past eleven, came the old drunken devil,
And ordered the young men to leave—
The girls to their beds—"not a word from yer
'eads"—
For, in such things he didn't believe.

When the young men had gone, the maiden lit John
To his room, and showed him *his* bed,
Where he soon sought rest, but it must be confessed,
Nor a verse nor a prayer had he said.

And there, to the last, he thought on the past—
On all that had happened that day—
Till, at length, in repose, his eyelids were closed,
And wrapt in sweet slumbers he lay.

But, alas for our wight, the mishaps of the night
Were renewed with the rooster's first crow;
For, there came a deep moan and a still deeper groan
Through the halls, from the bar-room, below.

And, at once, he began to think of the man
He had seen lying there, as if dead;
And he felt real sad, as he knew that he had
But the bar-room floor for a bed.

Such was John's position, but for a partition,
Two beds might as well have been one;
And he heard persons walking, and two girls were
talking,
And something was now going on.

As John later told it, a book wouldn't hold it,
And therefore, it must be condensed;
But this much he said, that "the girls got to bed,
And, in due time the battle commenced."

There was whispering, low grumbling, much scratching, some tumbling,
And every whipstitch a sharp slap;
They, sure, had bed-fellows! and John getting jealous,
Gave the old board partition a rap.

Then, a moment of quiet, then again, came the riot,
The shuffling, the laughter, and clatter;
And what all about? John, at last called out,
"Hello! what the devil 's the matter?"

Again all was quiet; again he inquired—
Then, with chuckles, and, doubtless, with shrugs,
At last came the answer—the half-subdued answer—
"Why, we're killing these dev'lish bugs!"

Next, *John* felt a bite, but, having no light,
The guest and the bugs took their chances;
So, all had their bites, and the bedchamber-knights
Made a brave, knightly use of their lances.

When the battle was over, the girls under cover,
And a sanguine, good victory won,
Came sounds shrill and quick—"Licking Creek! Licking Creek!"
And some, "Bloody Run! Bloody Run!"

In the woods on the hills piped the shrill whippoorwills,
Interspersed with the wildcat's howls;
Near his head gnawed a mouse, and from all round the house
Came the hootings and screechings of owls.

'Twas music, but not such as weary ones need—
In accents more mellow and deep;
Though unsoothing to ears, and fruitful of fears,
Our knights all surrendered to sleep.

It is written that darkness is older than light,
And it's true, as the wiseacres say,
That the darkest of hours—while the darkness still lowers,
Is the hour that heralds the day.

So, the land of all darkness, where light never shone,
Is nearer at hand than we dream;
Twixt the land where we are, and the dark land beyond,
There flows but a dark, narrow stream.

In that lorn land of darkness—that never saw light,
There are spirits as dark as the land:
Do they sometimes come near us, with darkness to blear us,
And over us wave the dark wand?

'Mong demons and apes there's no limit to shapes—
Whether human, or doubtful, or beast;
And when the big devils engage in their revels,
They're attended by, even, the least.

With a black, bony hand, the chief waves a wand—
And, behold, in what shapes they attend!
They come, one and all, they come, great and small,
And in deviltry vie and contend.

When John next awoke, his slumbers were broke'
By the howls of some cats and some hounds;
And he looked, in a spell, on those dark shapes o' hell,
While he heard most unearthly strange sounds.

In terror he lay and he gazed on the scene,
And, at least half enchanted he was ;
And, for a half hour he felt the strange power,
But unable to fathom the cause.

"Could *this* be the woman, a witch, or a demon?
Could *that* be the fair little maid?
Were *these* the young ladies, and those the young laddies
With whom he had ate, drunk and played?"

Then he thought of his prayer—and the lock of his hair—
He had given the kindly old dame!
Crossed his hands on his head and his prayers he said
Three times, in the Trinity's name.

And then, is if banished, the dark spectres vanished—
As they came, so, they all went away—
Soon the light shone in, the cocks crew again,
And he hailed the sweet peep o' the day.

But when he arose and looked for his clothes,
His wardrobe was quite disarranged ;
One piece lying here, the other piece there,
And his money all gone, save some change !

When he looked for his watch, it was found in his crotch—
Politely—the seat of his breeches ;
The legend* it bore, and the cross-keys he wore,
Proved a charm against goblins and witches.

His hat was beslimed, his boots were begrimed,
And his pockets were full of great holes ;
Coat and pants were a mess, his vest was a nest,
And his stockings were *minus* their soles.

*The horse-shoe.

But, of all other crosses and all other losses,
The loss of his money was worst;
O, the witches and goblins, their thievings and robbings—
Might the whole hellish brood be accursed!

Of all that was left he, now, made the best,
And returned to the regions below;—
And felt, as he wended his way, unattended,
As if going to the regions of woe.

In the hall-way there stood a pool of dark blood,
And near it a hound and her pup;
As he passed, on his way to see to his bay,
They were lapping and licking it up.

As horrors, thus, thickned, his heart turned and sickened
At the thought of still others in store;
And he paused for a moment and cast a look homeward,
As he wished himself thither, once more.

Arrived at the stable, he was almost unable
To avoid giving vent to his tears;
In a stall lay his horse, of the witches the worse,
And drowsily drooping his ears.

O, the sorrowful plight—the pitiful sight—
His foretop, his mane, and his tail!
Through fiendish abuse, he was unfit for use,
For travel, for trade, or for sale!

And where was the landlord?—the surly groom answered—
"He's away, but the devil knows where;
He goes when he chooses—'tell where, he refuses,
And returns when—no one's aware."

John indulged cogitation o'er the sad situation,
And he felt that his Barney and he
Were both *hors de combat*, and going the wrong way,
If a wrong way west there could be.

And where were the men in the bar-room seen,
So late, on the evening before?
And Pat made reply, with a squint to his eye,
"Well, I guess they're all purty sore;"

"And then, what is more than just falin sore,
They're a bit like the bats and the owls—
They're aboot late at night, but they shun the day-light,
An' they howl wid the wolf when he howls."

"In makin' replies I wud tell ye no lies,
But, as well, ye wud ask me no more;
Of what happens here, I kape purty clear,
An' to kape what I know, I have swore;"

"And as for yer horse, I dunno, of course,
Of anything makin' 'em seck;
But this much I know, that he looks much as though
The wetches had played em a threck."

As mum as a mouse, John returned to the house,
At a loss what to do, say, or think;
Since misfortune and trouble seemed destined to double,
He resolved to drown trouble in drink!

And Pat, the old tar, had the key to the bar—
And to have it, to him, was a feather—
So, the two went on, and, alas! for poor John,
They drank quite too freely together.

Sad truth to be spoken—John's vow was now broken—
But he soon felt both easy and rich;
Forgot all his troubles, saw bliss in air-bubbles—
A victim of—worse than the witch!

At breakfast the maid was again in her place,
And the dame, at the head, asked a blessing;
That look of deep sadness still shaded her face,
But, to John, she seemed still more caressing.

Meantime, certain noises were heard from without,
And, also, strange voices were there;
The maid went to see, and returned in a glee—
"The Gypsies! the Gypsies are here!"

The same ones, she thought, who had been there and got
Some provisions—were encamped in the wood—
And among them old hags who carried queer bags,
And one wore a frightful old hood.

"They want to trade horses," said the kindly old dame,
"And the women pretend to tell fortunes;
But it's ever the same, whatever the game,
The Gypsy will always bear watching."

Her message was true, to the porch all withdrew,
To look on the dark Gypsy clan,
With their horses and wagons, their luggage and baggage—
The wild, roving, swarthy "Rom-Man."

Alone on a bench sat a young Gypsy-wench
With a quaint old Gitáno-guitar,
And with voice and skilled hand made a music as grand,
As if wafted by winds from afar.

So, she sang and she played—the poor Gypsy-maid—
With the quaint old guitar on her knee,
And this song she sang to the musical clang—
"Apilyela gras Chai lapanee Luc'lee :"§§

"The region of Chal* was our dear native soil,
Where, in fulness of pleasure we lived without toil,
Till dispersed through all lands 'twas our fortune to be—
Our steeds, Gaudiana,† must now drink of thee."

Once kings came from far to kneel at our gate,
And princes rejoiced on our meanest to wait ;
But now who so near but would scorn our degree—
Our steeds, Gaudiana, must now drink of thee."

"For, the Undebel‡ saw, from his throne in the cloud,
That our deeds, they were foolish, our hearts they were proud ;
And in anger he made us his presence to flee—
Our steeds, Gaudiana, must now drink of thee."

"Our horses, should drink of no river but one ;
It sparkles through Chal, 'neath the smile of the sun,
But they taste of all streams save that only, and see—
Apilyela gras Chai lapanee Luc'lee !‖

The dame, maid, and John were charmed with the song,
And Pat, too, was list'ning and thinking ;
And 'ere very long, he had Gypsies and John
Gathered round the old bar, freely drinking.

And the siren of song was helping along
To inveigle him into her toils;
While the swindling old Gypsy, by no means as tipsy,
Was laying his plots for the spoils.

*Egypt.
†A beautiful river (of Spain.)
‡God.
‖From Borrow's Zincali or Gypsies of Spain.

As plays the moth-fly around a bright light,
So he asked her to sing him again ;
And she sang to the simple one's growing delight
This old, old, Rommany strain.

"I sallied forth upon my gray,
With him, my hated foe,
And when we reached the narrow way,
I dealt a dagger-blow."

"To blessed Jesus' holy feet,
I'd rush to kill and slay
My plighted lass, so fair and sweet,
Should she the wanton play."

"I slouch my beaver o'er my brow,
As down the street I rove,
For fear thy mother keen should know
That I her daughter love."

"The purslain weed thou must not sow,
If thou wouldst food obtain,
As poor would be the garden's show,
As would the gardner's gain."

"I spurred my courser o'er the ford,
Afar my luck I'd try,
Encountered me my blessed Lord,
And said, where dost thou hie?"

"From out the prison me they led,
Before the scribe they brought ;
It is no Gypsy thief, he said,
The Spaniards here have caught."

"Come to my window, sweet love, do,
And I will whisper there,
In Rommany, a word or two,
And thee far off will bear."

"A Gypsy stripling's sparkling eye
Has pierced my bosom's core;
A feat no eye beneath the sky
Could e'er effect before."

Brown Egypt's race in days of old
Were wont silk hose to wear,
But for their sins so manifold,
They now must fetters bear."

* * * * *

"The shoes, O, girl which thou dost wear
On those white feet of thine,
To none resign for love or prayer,
They're bought with coin of mine."

"To spy the window, love, I'd go
For I would creep in there,
And out, to thee, thy things would throw—
Thy mother not aware."

"I'll rise to-morrow, bread to earn,
For hunger 's worn me grim,
Of all I meet I'll ask in turn
If they've no beasts to trim."[56]

* * * * *

"I'll leave my home and haste to roam
In yonder bark of pride,
To lands far o'er the salt sea foam,
Where foreign nations bide."

"So sang the Gypsy prisoner,*
And thus his ditty ran;—
God send the Gypsy lassie here,
And not the Gypsy man."

"At midnight, when the moon began
To show her silver flame,
There came to him no Gypsy man—
†The Gypsy lassie came."

A song and a drink and a drink and a song,
And a fortune was, yet, to be told,
A child bewitched, to be taken along,
And a horse to be traded or sold.

And John was the victim, for the Fates did afflict him—
What wonder, indeed, that they should?
So, at her command, he opened his hand
To the wrinkled old hag in the hood.

She looked in his hand and she waved a black wand,
And then she looked into his eyes;
With an ominous look gazed into a book,
And then she gazed into the skies.

"You're a wand'ring wight," said she, "and last night
You were thinking and dreaming of home;
This morning, sir knight, you're in sorry plight,
As westward, ho, westward you roam."

*In a spanish prison.
†From Borrow's Zincali or Gypsies of Spain.

"You'll never live West, if the West you e'er see—
For westward, ho, westward I've been;
You're in love with the East to the depths of the sea,
And as deep with the maid of this inn."

"The star of your destiny's not in the West,
But eastward, it ever inclines;
The star that stands over the land of the blest,
Is the star that most brilliantly shines."

"Ho, eastward, ho, eastward's the home of the race,
And it's home, after all, that we seek;
Yet, the great Gypsy-man never reached the good land,
Though he saw it from Pisgah's high peak."

"Your fortune lies east, and not in the West
Ho, eastward, ho, eastward, young man;
Take the tide at its flood, there's luck in your blood—
You were born, not to serve, but command."

Every breath, now, seemed hushed, and the maid stood and blushed,
But, quickly, John paid down the chink,
When an old Gypsy clansman—the leader and plansman,
Proposed that they all take a drink:

Save John, all declined, and the hag gave a wink—
A wink of her own mystic kind—
For she well understood, that if anything would,
It was drink that would make a youth blind

O, wizard, O, witch, O Bacchus, how rich,
To make a poor fool, ye are prone!—
A serf to be king, in an hour, ye bring,
And a slave from his task to a throne!

Could she cure a sick horse?—was a question, of course—
And they shifted the scene to the stable—
Where they jabbered and sung in their own Gypsy tongue,
But all which, to John, was a babel.

The interpreter said that the horse was near dead,
And none but a chando* could cure him;
But this he said slyly, to the end that, more wilely,
To a *bisna*—a sale—he might lure him.

The result of it all was that, John, through, their jargon,
Sold his horse to the Gyps' for a song,
And his saddle and bridle went into the bargain—
"Yes," he thought, "they'd as well go along."

E'en the beam, when it's broken gives forth a sad token,
As if conscious of wrong and of pain;
And friends, when they're parted, oft' seem broken hearted,
If hopeless of meeting again:

And there may be remorse for abusing a horse,
If conscience, resuming her throne,
Become the accuser and lash the abuser
With a sense of the wrong he has done.

So with John and *his* horse, when the rogues led him forth,
As it were, to be shot or exiled;
E'en Barney looked sadly and his master felt badly,
For he wept and he cried like a child.

*A Gypsy doctor.

His cash and horse gone, among strangers alone,
Bewitched, and the game of a cheat—
A blot on his name and on his fair fame—
His ruin was well nigh complete.

Farewell to the tricksters, the sirens and victors—
Farewell to his Barney, farewell!
Muttering, "wine is a mocker and strong drink is a-raging,"
Into a deep slumber he fell.

But, e'en in his slumber, old scenes without number
Alternately loomed up before him,
And in soft silvery tones tender echoes from home,
Yet, reproachfully, seemed to steal o'er him.

O, angelic sleep, do thou tenderly keep
Thy downy wings folded upon him,
For the witches and wizards and the bad whisky "blizzards"
Together have fairly undone him.

So he slumbered at length on the bar-room bench
Where the dame and the maid had laid him;
Till at e'en, overhead, they put him to bed,
And there, with their choicest they stayed him.

When he next saw the day a bright cheerful ray
From Aurora played over his head,
And it seemed like a ray of hope that had come
To one just awoke from the dead.

As he quitted his chamber, he tried to remember
What had happened the previous day;
Dark images crowded, and his memory was clouded
As to all, save the loss of his bay.

His breakfast was light—had a poor appetite—
And the landlord was grum, as before ;
Naught happened to please him, a spell seemed to seize him,
And, as usual, he cursed and he swore.

John tried to assuage him, which seemd to enrage him ;
And he swore as he swallowed a gill :
John plead lack of money ;—reply, "that's d—nd funny—
Well, I'll take your big coat for the bill."

And he hurried away, as on the first day,
Taking with him a pretty full purse ;
And he said that he thought John had certainly got
"A d——n good price for 'is 'orse."

John, then, little dreamed that the landlord had schemed
With the Gyps' who had drugged, clipped, and bobbed him;
Nor, till later, believed that with drunkards and thieves
He had joined, when they plundered and robbed *him*.

When the landlord had gone, John was, once more, alone
With the dame and the maid of the inn,
And to them he related, with breath almost bated,
How, still more unlucky he'd been.

The dame turned away, having nothing to say,
And the maiden seemed speechless from fear ;
But the sorrowful tale turned her ruddy cheeks pale,
Whilst her heart heaved a sigh and a tear.

John, anxious to leave ere the landlord returned,
He called for what little remained ;
Gave his whip to the dame to keep till he came—
Should he ever come that way again.

If not, it was hers, and his spangle-new spurs
He gave to the old Irish groom :
But, as for the maid, the kind little maid,
He would see her, aside, in a room.

And there he assured her that the moment he saw her
He loved her, deep down in his soul ;
And she plighted him there by a lock of her hair—
"As the needle is plight to the pole."

"As for needles," said John, "I brought some along,
And I have a neat pack of them here ;
'Twas my mother who gave them, but now *you* shall have them
From me, as a small *souvenir*.

Nor scissors nor knife would e'er bring a wife,
Nor anything else that will sever ;
But a needle will prick a heart to the quick,
And in sewing there's union forever.

Though short was the shrift, she accepted the gift,
Nor did anything, happen amiss,
Beyond what was fair twixt a troth plighted pair—
The natural—the troth plighting kiss.

Such was the brief wooing 'twixt John and the maid,
But the time had arrived for his starting ;
And hither again, came the groom and the dame
To be present and witness the parting.

Said the groom of the stall as if to condole
With the guest, the unfortunate stranger—
"Cheer up my young man, be as brave as you can,
Maybe all isn't lost that's in danger;"

"An' many's the lad that has fared full as bad,
An' yet come all right in the end, sir;
What bad luck may tear to pieces to-day,
Better luck to-morrow may mend, sir."

"Advarsity, too, has a lesson for you,
An' it's bound for 'til try a man's metal;
But let 'em cheer up, and never give up,
While there's puddin' to put in the kettle."

"So I *bid* you farewell, an' I *wish* you quite well,
May the stars all be frien'ly above you;
Be true to yourself an' ev'ry one else,
An' Mary the vargin will love you."

(The last was the best and worth all the rest—
To John but it puzzled the dame:
Was it "Mary the Mother," or maid of the inn?
For, Mary was part of her name.)

"There's a bit of a song, an' it's not very long,
That, for aye, in my sowl keeps a ringin',
Twas writ be Tam Moore, an' I've sung it before,
An' wid you'r good leave I'll begin!"

"One bumper at parting!—tho' many
Have circled the board since we met,
The fullest, the saddest of any
Remains to be crown'd by us yet."

"The sweetness that pleasure has in it
Is always so slow to come forth,
That seldom, alas, till the minute
It does, do we know half its worth!"

"But fill—may our life's happy measure
Be all of such moments made up;
They're born on the bosom of Pleasure,
And they die 'mid the tears of the cup."

"As onward we journey, how pleasant
To pause and inhabit awhile
Those few sunny spots like the present,
That 'mid the dull wilderness smile."

"But Time, like a pitiless master,
Cries "onward!" and speeds the gay hours—
Ah never does Time travel faster,
Than when his way lies among flowers."

"But come, may our life's happy measure
Be all of such moments made up;
They're born on the bosom of Pleasure,
And they die 'mid the tears of the cup."

And, to be very frank, a big bumper they drank,
But John, looking full a year older
Than when he was roomed, his journey resumed,
With his saddle-bags over his shoulder.

No Barney to ride, still, westward he hied—
"Tramp, tramp," o'er the long weary way—
O'er the hills and the dales, the mountains and vales,
Until nearing the close of the day.

As evening came on, he felt sad, lone and lorn,
And his heart changed its beatings for home;
He sat down by the road, as if 'neath a big load,
And alone, 'neath all Heaven's wide dome.

Not a house was in sight nor a homestead light!
Should he, now, retrace, or advance?
And thus he revolved, and at last he resolved
To submit the grave question to chance.

Though on the highway, he was near to a by-way,
And *from* the by-way led a lane;
Go east, or go west? let chance be the test—
And he set up an improvised cane.

He balanced it well, but lo, when it fell,
It fell toward the by-way and lane;
And he tried it again and it fell toward the East,
And the third, toward the by-way again.

So he followed chance-lore, and he doubted no more
Of the truth of the teachings of old;
Yea, he fully believed he had not been deceived
In the fortune the Gypsy had told.

He quitted the highway, he entered the by-way
And he followed the lane to the end;
A homestead was there—inviting and fair,
And its owner an honest old Friend.

John was kindly received, his story believed,
Though much like a romance it seemed;
He was feasted and fed, he was lighted to bed,
And, once more, he slumbered and dreamed.

O, heaven on earth, what is not a home worth—
Such a home—compared with an inn—
Such an inn as the last, where two nights he had passed!
Might he ne'er fare so badly again.

To the sailor when tossed and his bearings are lost,
Or his vessel is shatter'd and stove—
Or the struggling life-boat, how welcome the port,
Or, even, a calm little cove!

Here, like one of old, of whom we are told,
He hired himself as a servant
To the honest old Friend, and here, to amend,
And to turn a new leaf, he determined.

And here, let us leave him, and may the gods shrive him—
His sins, up to date, all confess'd—
May no ill betide him, may kind Heaven guide him
To the beautiful land of the blest.

In the dull days of autumn, on the banks of Antietam,
In the valley so fertile and fair,
O'er the sturdy old oaks curled the Rommany's smoke,
For, a Rommany camp was there.

It was dimly in sight mid the shades of the night,
And the fagot's glim glare in the wood
Told many a bad tale of the wicked Zincali
That augered the neighbors no good.

Of farm-horses bobb'd, of stys and coops robb'd,
Of cattle and swine that were sick,
Of many things miss'd—a very long list—
And of women and children bewitch'd.

At the home of our hero, a gay caballero*
Appears at the head of the Cals†,
All mounted on horses—some rips and some coursers,
And wains full of callis‡ and pals‖.

"We come not to beg"—so their swarthy chief said—
"But to buy, to barter or sell;
To cure a sick swine, the murrain in kine,
To sing, or a fortune to tell."

The truth was, they traveled to buy, cheat and lie,—
To traffic, to barter or sell;
The simple to lure, nor sick ones to cure,
But to drug, to bewitch, and to spell.

Folks afraid not to deal lest the more they would steal,
And, thus, aggravate their misfortunes,
Chose the least of two evils—twixt the thieves and the devils—
And allowed them to tell them their fortunes.

There was the old hag with the sorcerous bag
And a hideous old "hocky" old hood,
And she looked, every stitch, like an ugly old witch,
Or a demoness sprung from the wood.

An adept in *la baji*,§ the traick *la bar lachi*,[57]
And the cast of the evil, (black,) eye,[58]
Bright, flashy, and bold as in frenzy it rolled,
And if cast at a child it would die.

There was the young siren with her luring guitar
And a song that had never been sung;
But the spirit of melody slept in the strings,
And the soul of the song in her tongue.

*Lord, gentleman.
†Gypsies.
‡Gypsy women.
‖Pals; confederates in mischief and crime.
§Fortune Telling.

Like the minstrels of old, who sang as they strolled—
Oft' rhymed[59] as they rollicked along—
And in gay roundelay sang and played life away,
So she rhymed, played, and sang them this song:

"'There is a bright land far beyond a dark river,
Where the wandering Gitános shall finally dwell;
'Tis the beautiful land from which they were driven
Because they offended the Great *Undebel*."

"'They were driven out from it in sadness and sorrow—
As exiles to wander 'neath heaven's blue dome;
Here camping to-day, but whither to-morrow?
Wherever he is, the Gitáno's at home."

From kingdoms and countries forbidden and banished,
"O'er the mountain's dark peak and the water's
white foam,
Ever stinted in food but never, yet, famished,
In all lands a stranger, yet, ever at home."

"'But when *Undebel* shall be no more offended,
The exiled Gitános shall all cease to roam—
Then the Great *Undebel* will declare 'it is ended,'
And call all the wand'ring Gitános back home."

Ah, how little she knew this last was but true
Of the home where, now, she was singing!
Scarce ended the lay, when whinny and neigh
From the camp in the woodland came ringing.

But the dusky old hag with the hood and the bag,
The book and the wand and the spell,
Was waiting and willing for the worth of a shilling
Each willing one's fortune to tell.

The mother was troubled till her burdens seemed doubled
Concerning the fate of her son ;
She might be deceived, yet she might be relieved—
"Nothing ventured," she said "nothing won."

So she opened her hand and the hag waved her wand,
And she steadily gazed, for a moment,
As into the sea, all the better to see,
Or to read and to auger the omens.

As she gazed in her hand, the haggis began—
"O, woman ! your heart's overflowing—
Like a rain-swollen fountain at the base of a mountain,
And your troubles are growing and growing."

"To a land far beyond the rivers and mountains
He has gone from his home, or is now on his way;
For awhile, on a gallant young bay he was mounted,
But where, tell me, now, is that gallant young bay ?"

"But you need not despair, be patient and bear—
The bird that migrates in the spring
But seldom stays long, no matter where gone,
For he's apt to remain on the wing."

"If his flight has been west, his wing 's not at rest,
For his heart hasn't gone with him there :
The heart, beyond measure, will cling to its treasure,
And the birds all know when to pair."

Though all this witchery but deepened the mystery
That hung o'er the fate of poor John,
The dame paid the fee and was glad to be free
From the hag with the bag and the wand.

Just then, at full speed, came a galloping steed
From the camp in the wood, up the lane,
Nor saddle nor rider, nor halter nor bridle,
And a queer looking top, tail, and mane!

He stopped at the gate, and there seemed to wait
For his master, as often before,
To be gently led in to a full rack and bin,
Through the wide open, old stable-door.

He neighed and he whinnied while he, waiting, continued,
Until all gathered 'round him and then—
"It's Barney!" cried one, "but O! where is John?"—
"He's ours," cried the bold Gypsy-men—

"He's ours—that horse,"—and they took him by force,
For the horse was unwilling to go—
And they hurried away, without oats, corn or hay,
To the camp in the wood, just below,

As the sun sank low, in a rayless red glow
Beyond the blue hills in the West;
But when night came on, the parents of John
In vain sought for comfort and rest.

A riderless horse and grim thoughts of a corpse
Disturbed them and haunted their dreams;
And they talked of the dangers to lone traveling strangers,
Far westward o'er mountains and streams.

Long and dark was the night, but at length came the light,
And in search of the horse went the men—
To the wood the men went, but where was the tent—
Ah! where was the Gypsy camp then?

Like the Arabs' tent—gone, 'twixt the dusk and the dawn,
And, for plodders, pursuit would be vain ;
And, what was still worse, all in doubt was their course,
And where would the rogues camp again ?

Deeper still grew the haze of autumn's dull days,
As the days glided lazily on
And deepened the mystery, the still growing mystery;
That hung over Barney and John.

O, the pain of suspense, how, still more intense
Than the knowledge of, even, the worst ;
As adversity thickens, hope deferred the heart sickens
And the last o't's worse than the first.

No telegraph then, no magnetic pen—
No flash of the news o'er the wires ;
No "lightning express," and even the Press
Dimly lighted the homes of our sires.

The days and the weeks, the months and the years
Were longer, much longer, somehow ;
And the world moved so slow, and the news didn't go
By steam and by lightning, as now.

Near the last of October—not to tell the tale over—
In the darkness of night, very late,
There was heard an alarm at the old home-farm,
As if made at the barn-yard-gate.

It was drizzly and dark, and the dogs bayed and barked—
Half-friendly, as, seldom, before ;
And strange to say, they went not away,
From the porch, at the homestead-door.

Thus, wearied and worried, the old man hurried
To call up the dull, drowsy boys,
Who, with lantern and dogs, groped 'round through the fogs,
While seeking the source of the noise.

And, strange to tell, there, in the grim, ghastly glare
Stood a horse without saddle or rein;
But stranger than all, on his head a head-stall—
And Barney it was, home again!

And all were elate, as, wide went the gate,
On which were the marks of his gnawing;
And, on looking around, they found, on the ground
His tracks and the marks of his pawing.

He was jaded and worn, and the halter was torn—
The strap from the stall on his head—
But, he gently walked in, to the rack and the bin,
To be watered and bedded and fed.

E'en his equine relations showed signs of impatience
For a friendly nose-touch, once again;
But Barney refrained, as if feeling ashamed
Of his half-tail, his foretop and mane.

But his eye and his attitude showed feelings of gratitude—
For this, e'en the horse seems to show—
While, too often, his master, his inhuman master,
Repays it with kick, cut, or blow.

(How dreadful the thought that, if brutes could but talk,
What tales of dark deeds they could tell!
Had the horse but the fitness to be a court-witness,
How the records of torture would swell!)

How seldom there's joy without an alloy,
Or pleasure where pain has no share;
Joy came with the horse, though least of the loss,
But where was his rider—O, where?

So, they roused all the neighbors, redoubled their labors
And searched all the country around;
Though they searched all the high-ways, and even the by-ways,
No trace of the lost one was found.

Not a trace nor a track, nor e'en on the back
Of the horse any mark of a saddle;
There was no matted hair, nor other mark there,
As if made by, even, a straddle.

How many a dark sign of disaster was seen
And read in the stars of that time!
How many a wild dream of foul murder was dreamed—
Of death by mishap or by crime

And many-tongued Rumor told many a tale
Of the foot-pads that followed the road;
And the darker the tale that Rumor detailed
The worse for the lost did it bode.

And the dog's nightly howl and the hoot of the owl,
(Or, as in Old English was said,
"The owl that of death the bode bring*eth*,")*
All hooted and howled, "he is dead!"

Still the days glided on till bright summer had gone
And Autumn was well on the way,
Without any word from our hero, poor John,
To relieve dread suspense and delay.

*Chaucer.

And behold, one night* it became quite as light
As the day, with a sunrise at seven!
The old man looked out and in terror cried out,
"The stars are falling from heaven!!"

From indifferent repose all the household arose
And saw how the stars filled the air;
All ablaze were the skies, far and near were heard cries
Intermingled with sobbing and prayer.

As the seared autumn leaves when strewn by the breeze,
Or hurled by the storm in its might,
So the meteors were strewn as by a cyclone
That hurled them from heaven that night!

'Twas the end of all things—of kingdoms and kings—
And the great judgment-day was at hand!
Men were ready to call on the mountains to fall
And hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.

The night passed away, as of old, dawned the day,
And the sun rose a quarter to seven;
So, day followed night, and night followed day,
With all the stars shining in heaven.

For a time all men mourned, for all men felt warned
That the days of old Earth had been numbered;
Many ceased from their labors, sang and prayed with their neighbors,
While many—nor ate, slept, nor slumbered.

And the sad parents said if they knew John were dead
'Twould afford them a sort of relief;
But this doubt and suspense—this awful suspense—
Was becoming a heart-crushing grief.

*Night of Nov. 13, 1833.

Let heaven and earth go, could a mother but know
The fate of the long absent one;
The heavens might fall—sun, moon, stars, and all,
Could she once more embrace her lost son."

It was late in November, or early December,
As his parents in reverie sat,
They were startled, forsooth, by a galloping youth,
With the neighborhood mail in his hat.

And he called out, "hello! here's a letter for you,—
To John Smith, senior, addressed—
And the postmaster said, as the postmark he read,
It comes from a place far out West,"

As the old man received it, he hardly believed it,
And the mother exclaimed, "John is dead!"
"No! no! it's his hand, I *know* it's his hand,"
Cried the father," why see, the seal's red!"

And all gathered round, while, 'mid silence profound—
Hearts throbbing, but not a word spoken—
'Mid trembling and fears, yea, sighings and tears,
The seal of the letter was broken!

All eyes sought the same—a first glance at the name—
And was it, indeed, the lost one's?
Yea, one of the older peeped over a shoulder
And shouted, "it's John's! yes, it's John's!"

Its date, apropos, was at "Circleville, O."
November, the twentieth day,
In the year A. D. eighteen thirty three,
And the county was named Pickway.

(Though written in prose, it abounded in "O's,"
Evoked, by the place and the times:—
Yet one might suppose if John had but chose,
Might have written it thus, in quaint rhymes:)

"On the Scioto river, where the poor human liver
Is constantly on the decline,
And the people are shaking in spite of their taking
Huge doses of sulphate quinine."

"And they look pale and sallow, like cakes of stale tallow,
Or bacon well smoked or kiln-dried;
And their eyes are deep sunken, and they walk as if drunken,
Yet, here they forever abide."

"If you call for 'mine host,' you'll encounter his ghost—
Afflicted with fever and chills;
If you meet with 'mine hostess,' you'll find her a ghostess,
A victim of powders and pills."

"The hostler and maid would balance, if weighed ;
He swears and complains of the 'shakes';
And *she* looks so sad, O ! she's only a shadow,
And talks of how much her back aches."

"The girls, though they're chaste, are nearly all waist,
And barren of personal charms ;
Though land is so plenty, there's not two in twenty
Who have either fortunes or farms."

"You see a young couple, they're gaunt, but not supple,
And neither can dance nor sing songs ;
I'd not overstate, nor yet underrate,
They remind me of shovel and tongs."

"Land's good and dirt cheap, but the roads get so deep
That, to find a good piece is a joy—
Which they make with long poles, crosswise in mud-holes,
And this is ycleped 'corduroy.' "

"The soil is so good, farmers could, if they would,
Raise harvests without cultivation,—
But to plant and to sow, and the seed would grow—
Nor prayer nor, fertilization."

"Though all this is so, prices of grain are so low,
It hardly pays Labor to raise it ;
And nothing is truer, farming here is so poor,
'Twould take Jackson courage to praise it."

"Chills, sugar of maples and corn are the staples—
Like Lombardy poplars corn grows—
Three ears on each stalk—if you think this big talk,—
I can prove it by coons, jays, and crows."

"These creatures abound, wild and tamed they are found—
In spite of guns, hunters, and dogs;
Squirrels and jaybirds in cages, crows working for wages,
And coons eating corn with the hogs."

"The coon and the crow steal their way as they go,
But the worst corn-thieves are the jays;
And of all the corn-panics was that at Van Dannicks,
Where they cleaned up a field in two days!"

"But tall as the corn grows—pumpkins *still* more enormous—
The half of one, cut right in two,
Was as big as the dome of St. Peters at Rome,—
You'll hardly think half of it's true."

"And they use them for stables—(now, these are not fables)—
To stable their horses and cows—
From which, I assume, that besides, there is room
For fodder-gangs, racks, bins, and mows."

"As for architecture, you could hardly conjecture
The make-ups, materials, or styles;
A house of round logs with a place for the hogs
Underneath, for it's perched upon piles."

"At one gable-end a stick-chimney append'
Daubed thinly with Scioto mud;
A roof of clapboards embower'd with gourds
From the which solid cider 's so good."

"And then, the interior, how convenient, superior,
To have all apartments in one!
Parlor, chamber and kitchen, altogether they pitch in,
While angels delight to look on."

"As for barns, they're unknown—that's of timber and stone—
And the stables are built of round poles;
As they have no barn-floors, they need no barn-doors,
And they thresh on the ground, as of old."

"The men wear loose blouses and short, baggy, trousers,
Exposing their lank, bony shins;
On their feet they wear shoes, shape of Indian canoes—
On their heads they wear caps of coon-skins."

"Here water is plenty—sometimes quite *too* plenty—
But seldom it's sweet, pure or clear;
A rare luxury, is sassafras tea—
Hard cider they drink all the year."

"They eat pork and beans and poke-root greens,
And O! the big barl-pumpkin-pie!
For a rare breakfast-dish give me salt cat fish,
Says the native-born bon(n)y Buckeye."

"With all this, the Buckeyes—the native-born Buck-eyes,
Are honest and kind in their way;
But if this is the West, the much-boasted West,
I hardly expect I shall stay."

"Since this writing commenced a most fearful event
Happened here, full of awe and surprise—
Between midnight and morning — what a terrible warning!
O, the stars all fell from the skies!!"

"People mourned and they sighed, they prayed, sang and cried,
While the tears rolled down their sad faces;
But when the time came, the sun rose all the same,
And the night found the stars in their places."

"Some have quit all their labors, sing and pray with their neighbors,
And they neither buy, borrow, nor spend;
And, indeed, cousin Harriet has put off getting married—
Since the world will soon come to an end."

* * * * *

"O! once more at home, and I'll never more roam—
Give my love to the folks, one and all;
And—but you need not tell—if all goes well,
You may see me back home this fall."

So ended the letter, but it made things no better,
For it left the home-folks, still, in doubt;
True, it bore John's name, but it sounded so strange,
That its meaning was past finding out.

E'en the name of the place seemed queer on its face—
For they never had heard before
Of a "Circleville, O.," and it sounded as though
'Twere a name from some far, foreign shore.

And the style of the people—such queer looking people—
There were none such this side of the seas;
Complexions as sallow as cakes of old tallow!
Wearing loose, flowing blouses and short, baggy trousers!
And on their feet, shoes shaped like Indian canoes!
Were it not for the size of their native buck-eyes,
Surely these must be Japs or Chinese;
Pumpkins as big as the dome of St. Peters at Rome!
The whole thing seemed like a huge jest.
As for cousin *Harriet* putting off getting married—
Why, they *had* no such relations out west.

But strangest of all,—if John wrote it at all—
Not a word about losing his horse;
Not a word to explain—had the boy gone insane?
Or, maybe. gone mad from remorse!

His horse in the stable—to doubt it unable—
Then why leave his loss unexplained?
Had their own eyes deceived them? could they no more believe them?
So, the doubt and suspense, still, remained.

Nor neighbor nor friend could the needed help lend,
In solving the deep mystery —
So dark and profound no mortal could sound—
As well sound the depths of the sea.

On a night drear and dark, again the dogs barked,
But fiercer than ever before;
The clouds were a lower and dismal the hour,
While the rain either pattered or poured.

Not a soul ventured out—sure, no thieves were about
Nor a witch, ghoul, nor elf was abroad;
Youth slumbered and slept, but Age waked and wept,
Commending the lost one to God.

Quite late came the dawn and the rain pattered on
In soft lullabys on the roofs;
'Neath featherbed, crept, still the young folks slept,
'Till 'roused by sharp calls and reproofs.

Then, forth through the gloom, to milk, feed and groom,
Grumly groping their way in the dark;
But the dogs on before to the feeding-room door,
Where they smelt and they yelped, bayed and barked.

As the door stood ajar, a faint cry, as from far,
Seemed to soothe yelps and barks to a bay;
And now, a surprise! what a sight met all eyes!
Half concealed, lay a child in the hay!

Some ran from the barn to give the alarm—
Spell-bound stood the rest, looking on;
One stoutly cried out, "there's Gypsies about!"
Another, "yes, an' John's horse is gone!"

On looking around, plain traces were found
Of the Gypsy-thieves having been there—
Some feed had been nimm'd, a riding-horse trimm'd,
And the witches had ridden a mare!

But whose was the child?—conjectures ran wild,—
With some, this was query the first;
But the mother of John, not forgetting her own,
Said, "this child must be cared for and nursed."

When fully uncovered, it was, only, discovered
That the child was, at least, a year old—
A dear little boy, cheek-dimpled and coy,
But in tatters and shivering with cold.

Kind motherly arms soon developed its charms,
And in less than a week 'twas a pet;
But the good dame sighed, and sometimes she cried,
While the girls said, "mother, don't fret."

And she often replied, as she wept and she sighed.
"Let us hope that all, yet, will be well;
These are God's wondrous ways in these latter days,
And the end, he alone can tell."

"Had I never consented—O! I'm almost demented—
That we let John go west all alone;
Had *some* one gone with him—an only friend with him—
That his fate might the better be known."

"As for this strange letter, this poetical letter,
I care very little about it;
The more I hear of it, the less I think of it—
The more I hear of it, I doubt it."

For a fortnight or more, there was an uproar,—
Women trembled much like aspen leaves;
From farm-house to farm-house the neighbors were roused,
And the men went in search of the thieves.

But no Gypsies were found in the country all round,
Nor had any one lost a child—
No, not the least clue, and the marvel still grew,
'Till the story the evenings beguiled.

And all that was learned when the searchers returned,
Was, that Gypsy bands had been around,
But whence they had come, or whither they'd gone,
Were mysteries strangely profound.

Like the Babe of the Manger, this mysterious stranger
Was visited, homaged, and bless'd;
Each visiting dame suggested a name,
While she fondled, snuffed, smoked, and caress'd.

So the talk about John and the foundling went on,
Wherever the gossips assembled;
And they talked of its size, hair, nose, mouth and eyes,
And whose it might be, or resembled.

One didn't "know who, but *some* one, she knew—
The name, she couldn't "just *think* on"—
And an old maiden sister e'en ventured to whisper—
It didn't "look much unlike John."

Mysteriously strange is the solace of change,
E'en that of one grief for another;
A grief-mingled joy was the poor foundling boy—
So saddened with thoughts of its mother.

Brown autumn had gone, stern winter came on,
And the heart of a mother still yearned;
Every leaf had grown sere, all nature was drear,
And the lost one had not yet returned.

As, oft' the dogs barked, some one exclaimed "hark!"
And fond expectations were stirred—
While all eyes were strained and all necks were craned,
Hearts sickened with hope, still, deferred.

And sad was the lay o'er the one far away—
As if lost in some far, foreign clime;
And hearts were as drear as the time of the year,
For hearts were in tune with the time.

It was late in December, if I rightly remember,
The same galloping youth came along;
And he shouted, "hello! look here, do you know—
That letter I brought you was wrong?"

And he muttered and sputtered, he stammered and stuttered,
But all they could gather was this:
Some mistake in the borough, the town, or the 'burg, O!—
And something about the "wrong Smith."

That postmaster Walker had heard from the author,
And the letter must, now, be returned;
But, the young folk refused, evaded, excused,
And finally said it was burned.

So, the nine days' bubble, had made all its trouble,
And the winter dragged slowly along;
While John's going west was becoming a jest,
And the poor foundling boy an old song.

Some wags, by the way, no friends, I should say—
Real foes of the Smiths, too, it *may* be—
Or, merely for sport, got up a report,
That old Mrs. Smith had a baby!

Said good Mrs. Smith, as she gave it a kiss,
"Such swine should have rings in their noses;"
And, discarding all names proposed by the dames,
She called the poor foundling her Moses.

'Twas among the folk-lore of the dim days of yore,
When folks were more free to believe,
That dead people walked and dumb oxen talked
At twelve o' the clock, Christmas eve.

So, on Christmas night, while the stars shone bright,
John's father lay hid in the hay
In the dark feeding-room, all alone in the gloom,
To hear what the oxen would say.

And while lying there on his rude, lowly lair,
Awaiting what e'er might impend,
His skin crept with chills, and, like porcupine quills
His hair stood erect upon end.

As the hour drew near he heard what appeared
Like the sound of a far distant bell
Tolling the midnight-hour from an ivy-crowned tower,
And into deep slumber he fell.

As the sound died away he heard a voice say—
And the moisture of breath settled on him—
"Though weeping endure for a night, be assured,
That joy shall return with the morning."

"Though the night may be dark and the dogs bay and bark,
Light and joy will return with the day;
Though the winter be long and the birds all gone,
They'll return with the flowers in May."

"And it shall come to pass that the ox and the ass
Shall be loosed from their long, tedious tether,
And in cool shady nooks, beside the clear brooks,
Lie down in green pastures together."

"When the lone wandering son from afar shall return,
No more from his kindred to sever—
When the lost shall be found, joy shall spring from the ground,
And the homestead be brighter than ever."

'Twas thus the ox spoke, and when the man woke—
As if from a night-mare, or dream—
His chills were all gone, he was humid and warm,
As if bathed in a vapor, or steam.

Then, softly to bed he stole, but he said
Not a word to his wife, for he knew—
"What one gossip knows," as the old saying goes,
"All the others will soon know too."

Though tempted to tell—why not just as well?
On reflection he thought it the best—
Lest he might be deluded—to keep it secluded
Within his own, trustworthy breast.

But secrets are prisoners—all unruly prisoners—
And anxious as birds to be free;
They're full of unrest, and they trouble the breast,
As the winds do the face of the sea.

And the old man felt burdened—yea, more and more burdened,
The longer he kept it concealed;
Moreover, at length, it wasted his strength,
'Till 'neath it he wavered and reeled.

And he sent for the doctor—an old "dutch" doctor—
Who soon came a-riding the gallop,
With his saddle-bags filled with powders and pills,
Salts, senna, elixirs, and jalap.

—With pulse and with tongue he found nothing wrong
The patient complained of his breast—
"Such a *weight*, here, of late—worse, at *night*, here, of late—
And all because John has gone west."

"My patient, indeed, it's not physic you need,
Juscht patiently vait, bear un vait,"
Said the doctor,—"let patience be doctor,
Un you'll sooner got rid of dot veight."

"Der night may be dark un der dogs howl un park,
But you patiently vait for der day;
Your pain may pe great from such a pig veight—
Juscht vait, it vill all pass avay."

"You're now preaching patience. said the hypoed old patient,—
What the nightingale preached to the fox;
O, a secret to keep! have I talked in my sleep?
Why, doctor, you talk like the ox!"

And he looked at his wife, an' he said to her, "wife,
The doctor must think I'm a fool;
But *do* tell me who,—I can't think it's you,—
Has been playing tell-tale out of school!"

As if half ashamed, thus evaded the dame—
"Why, I'm suff'ring in that very way—
With a weight on my breast, since John 's away west,
An' it's far worse at night than by day;
Though I haven't played fox, nor eaves-dropt the ox,
Nor lain in the feeding-room hay."

The old doctor smiled, and he took up the child,
And he flattered and praised the old lady—
That in her old age—her *green* old age—
She had gotten so handsome a baby.

Having well served his inner' on wine and good dinner,
He left them some *fœtidus* pills,
For relief of the breast, to improve their night's rest
And lighten the weight of their ills.

Having heartily dined, he got heavily wined,
And he lay at full length on a chest—
On the wood-chest he lay all the rest of the day
With a terrible weight on *his* breast.

And the night was pitch dark, without glimmer or spark,
And it rained, and it rained, and it poured;
But what cared the doctor, the boosy old doctor,
While he slept, and he slept, and he snored.

At length he awoke, and the first word he spoke—
He inquired concerning his horse;
But he seemed quite consoled when repeatedly told
That his horse had been stabled, of course.

Then, again, he relapsed and he seemed quite collapsed,
And complained of a weight on his breast;
Yea, e'en in his dreams he asked, in his gleams,
Whether John had returned from the West.

When the morning light dawned he gaped and he yawned,
And complained that he felt very dry;
So, *imprimis*—first—to quench his great thirst,
He took a good horn of old rye.

From the good breakfast-table, he went to the stable
With the boys, while the stars still glimm'd;
But what was his rage, for a man of his age,
When he saw that his horse had been trimmed!

He stood and he gazed, indignant, amazed,
At the sight and the plight of his horse;
He smote on his breast and he promptly expressed
His feelings with very great force.

But, bridled and saddled, his horse he soon straddled
And with powders and pills and jalap
Away he soon rode, M. D., *ála mode*,
Down the lane, and as usual, the gallop.

And as he was going, but few hairs were flowing
From foretop, from mane or from tail;
Yet, away he went, on speed full bent,
Like a schooner outriding a gale.

The holidays came and went with the name,
Nor once had the patron saint smiled;
All joyless the days and among heaven's rays
Not a star blinked or smiled o'er the child.

The next Job's comforter was a more frequent visitor—
The Rev. John Johnson McCree
Of the Calvinist school, who favored home rule,
But believed that "what *is* was to be."

He'd been there before, John's loss to deplore
With his parents, in times so distressing;
But, still more astounding, he had heard of the foundling,
And now he had come with his blessing.

He lingered and stayed, he exhorted and prayed,—
While some rather carelessly listened—
Prayed *for* the lost sinner, he stayed for his dinner,
And suggested the child should be chris'ned.

The old folks reflected, but they mildly objected,
As they thought it was rather too soon;
And, moreover, they thought, as *they* had been taught—
They'd "wait the increase of the moon,
Though the child should go nameless till June."

And more than all this, would it not be amiss,
Should the child have, already, been named?
And God, only knows what a day may disclose,
For, the child might, e'en yet, be reclaimed."

"All that may be true," said the Reverend "true blue,"
"But, seeing how little 'twould cost,
Better ten times baptized than that its vain cries
Should ascend with the wail of the lost."

But yet he agreed, though he gave little heed
To the doctrines or teachings of men;
And just as they chose, he wouldn't oppose,
For he'd cheerfully come soon again.

So they talked time away until late in the day,
And supper, meantime, crowned the board;
There was wisdom and wit when the candles were lit,
And the wan, waning fire was shored.

How cheerful the blaze, as it sent forth its rays,
How inspiring good coffee and wine!
The preacher gave thanks and they ate and they drank
'Till the clock on the stair struck nine.

For the time, all their troubles were light as air bubbles,
And the host was as gay as the guest;
All ills were forgotten, and they scarce even thought on
The lost one, far away, in the West.

Amid cheery chat, merry jest an' all that,
The evening passed smoothly away;
It was growing too late for to "tak' the gate,"
So, the preacher consented to stay.

By quips and by turns he quoted from Burns—
From his master-piece, bold Tam O'Shanter—
How, on his gray mare, he rode "hame frae Ayr,"
Ahead o' the witches, the canter.

Nae shilly nor shirk, passed the "auld haunted kirk,"
Whence the legion of black witches sallied;
How swiftly they followed, how they screeched, screamed, and halloed,
While Tam his auld mare bravely rallied.

How, ere his mare, Meg, made the key o' the brig,
A carlin had lit on her rump;
How Tam came off hale, while she captured Meg's tail
"And left the auld mare scarce a stump."

But, said deacon Smith, "there's more real pith
In the *twa* lines describing the storm;
The wrath of his Kate, because Tam was late—
How she nursed it, to keep her wrath warm.

To this gentle hint, with a clerical squint,
Quite promptly replied John McCree—
"Not so with *my* Patience—under all provocations—
She's whatever *is* was to be."

Thus, they chatted and laughed, they snuffed and they quaffed—
Now sitting alone, there, together;
But, before twelve o'clock, the crow of the cock
Proclaimed the approach of foul weather.[61]

"Moreover," said Smith, "and it's not a mere myth
But an old-fashioned well-founded warning,
That the night-crowing cock before twelve o'clock,
Means devilment done before morning."

Said the parson, "let's not for the morrow take thought,
For, the morrow we never may see;
Moreover, we ought be content with our lot,
For whate'er it is was to be."

Whether scripture was read, or prayers were said,
Is more than the writer remembers;
But it runs in his head, ere the two went to bed,
They carefully covered the embers.

Yea, even much more —they locked every door
Upon horses, cows, heifers, and stirks;
The house-doors were barred and the gateways tarred,[62]
Thus, showing their faith by their works.

What more could be done? Smith loaded his gun
With powder and ball and with shot;
"Near the head of my bed I'll have it," he said,
"And for witches and thieves make it hot."

Gun loaded and cocked and all the doors locked,
Let witches and thieves do their best,
Gates bolted and barred, and some even tarred,
Man and beast might slumber and rest.

All a bed were the boys and hushed every noise,—
In repose slumbered all the sweet vale,
As it stretched far and wide to the blue mountain side,
And the scene might embellish a tale.

'Twas a calm winter night and dim was the light
Of a few blinking stars, here and there;
'Twas as silent as death, while the winter-king's breath
With fairy frost-work filled the air.

Night's curtain withdrawn, softly followed the dawn,
And Aurora, with lips all aglow
With radiance divine in the golden sunshine,
Kissed greetings to hoar frost and snow.

As the day-king arose from his deep, dark repose,
Spreading light where e'er there are worlds,
Every forest and glade was in ermine arrayed,
And sparkled with diamonds and pearls.

And in the *sun*-glade there appeared a mermaid—
An omen of evil, or good ;[63]
But, which of the two—of weal or of wo,—
Nor parson nor Smith understood.

Poor Smith was alarmed, but the parson, full armed
In his faith against all "mysteries,"
Now, reassured Smith against omen and myth,
And that whatever is was to be.

But, all this aside, it could not be denied
That the sight was surpassingly grand ;
That wood, hill, and dale, and, indeed, the whole vale
Resembled a bright, fairy land.

At the morning devotions he read certain portions,
From the tale of the prodigal son,
And in brief exhortation he gave consolation,
And he prayed for the lost one's return.

And while he so prayed the little one played,
But the mother sighed deeply and sobbed,
And she wept for her own, whose fate was unknown,
And for her whom the Gypsies had robbed.

At the table, now spread, Smith sat at the head,
But the parson, in John's vacant place ;
And before they broke bread, as usual, he said
O'er the repast a long, fervent grace.

Ere the visit was ended, again on knees bended,
As usual, he led all in prayer ;
They worshiped, adored, they besought and implored
The Lord the long lost one to spare.

That *He* would protect him, bless, guide and direct
him—
And all his sins might be forgiven;
That if no more on earth, here, around the home-
hearth—
They all might meet him in heaven!

(How almost sublime, in the good olden time,
Were the pastoral visit and prayer!
Nor sermon nor song howe'er loud and long,
Brought blessings and comforts so rare.)

"Why, how in the d—— could the mare get away?
Are my saddle and bridle still there?"
Why how in d—l did you hunt in the field?
And he looked it, but didn't quite swear.

"O, no," answered one, "saddle and bridle not gone—
We thought, once, we heard a strange noise—
But we said to ourselves, they're witches or elves,
And again went to sleep, like good boys,"

They hunted all 'round, yet nothing was found,
Save tracks leading out through the lane
Of horse, or of mare, it did not appear,
And all mere conjectures were vain.

"I told you" said Smith, "it was not a mere myth,
But an old-fashioned, well-founded warning,
That the crow of the cock before twelve o'clock,
Meant devilment done before morning."

Indignant and wroth was he of the cloth,
And protested it smelt of foul play;
As for elves, ghouls and witches, those "infernal
bitches,"
He thought they had, all, had their day.

And as for a witch, she could never cross pitch,
Nor enter a door over tar,
Nor pass through a gate in that menacing state,
Even though all the gates were ajar.

But all jokes aside, and balked of his ride,
If the witches and elves thought it fair,
With bridle and saddle his way he would paddle
On his trusty old nag, "Shank's mare."

Yea, indeed, even so, do I yet see him go—
A victim of tricks, olden time—
And the sun turned the snow and the hoar frost aflow,
And the roads into mud, slush, and grime,

While, rather down-hearted, the parson departed –
"We, now, might as well all agree,"
Said one of the rustics—an adept in all *such* tricks—
"That *whatever* is *was* to be."

The parson, not far past the gate with the tar,
Had his eyes still fixed on the track—
When deacon and dame exclaimed it's a shame,"
And hailing him, begg'd him come back.

And he promptly returned but his cheeks fairly burned,
As wearied and worried he waded
Through treacherous grime, and indeed, by the time
He got back, he was wofully jaded.

Whereupon, while he rested, the deacon suggested
To one of the "innocent" wags,
That saddle and bridle on a man was as idle
As tar on a gate for the hags.

That to help McCree home, take one of their own—
A horse that would sure carry double—
Of course, not the one with the crazy back bone,
Or else there would, surely, be trouble.

So parson and wag got astride of the nag—
The parson, somehow, on behind—
Of course on the roan with the crazy back-bone,
For, to kick, he was slightly inclined.

Adown the winding lane they flew,
The loping roan astride,
"Hold, hold your horse, I beg yo, do!"
The praying preacher cried.

"Hold, on, hold on, hold on to me!
And trust my trusty nag,
Whatever happens was to be!"
Replied the rustic wag.

"Hold on, hold on!" the parson cried,
"Hold on!" the rustic said,
"Now shall your boasted faith be tried,"
As down the lane they sped.

Hurrah! and faster, still, they go,
Unheeding wet or dry,
And horse and rider snort and blow—
"Hurrah!" the rustics cry.

Splash, splash, still swifter is their speed,
The mud, the water flies;
"Hold on to me and take good heed,"
The youthful Gilpin cries.

"Hold on! hold on! I'll pray for John—
That he'll return again;
Your *brother* John, that's westward gone—
But, keep a steady rein!"

"Hep, hep hurrah! though swift our speed,
Hold tightly on to me,
Have faith, and trust my trusty steed—
What happens is to be."

"If John comes back 'it *was* to be,'
If not, he was to stay;
So, if what happens is to be,
Pray what's the use to pray?"

The parson's fervent prayer for John
Was broke' by jolts and jerks,
And while he to his faith held on,
He proved it by his works.

At length, safe and sound at the place whither bound,
The parson's good folk were delighted,
For his witch-ridden mare had preceded him there,
And caused them to feel sore affrighted.

Sans saddle and bridle, *sans* parson, *sans* rider,
She'd arrived 'twixt the dusk and the dawning,
Looking sadly degraded, lank, weary and jaded,
She was found at the gate in the morning.

No time to be wasted, the rustic back hasted,
Taking saddle and bridle along;
The parson forgot them, and ere he bethought him,
The cunning young trickster had gone.

As he galloped along, twixt whistle and song,
He roguishly *so*liloquized—
"Well, if so it be, that what is *was* to be,
The parson should not be surprised."

"And I'll hasten me home and the parson may come
For his saddle and bridle, some day;
If not *for* the saddle, it may be *to* a bridal—
When the birds shall be mating in May."

Of a dreary digression let me, here, make confession,
And ere it grow sluggish and stale,
Hasten back with the rider—the rustic young rider—
To the homestead, the source of my tale.

And there let us see what more there may be—
May be worth our while to relate—
Renew our long quest for our hero gone west,
And the weal or the woe of his fate.

'Twas the depth of mid-winter—that sad, gloomy winter,
A wondrous and note-worthy year,
When the stars fell from heaven like leaves when storm-driven,
And hearts quaked with terror and fear.

Yet the gossips ne'er ceased to visit and feast
At the home of the victimized Smiths,
With whom they condoled, strange stories they told
And talked of signs, wonders, and myths.

For three winter-moons they continued their croons
For the lost one, the foundling, and all,
And they seemed to have fear lest the time might be near
When they'd want for a pretext to call.

And Candlemas came with the gossiping dame,
And the ides of loud March under Mars,
Saint Patrick, Fools day, and finally May
With her flowers and kindlier stars.

But a fast fading one was the mother of John
'Neath the weight of her sorrows and cares;
She had hoped against hope until, ceasing to hope,
She languished in watchings and prayers.

As time rolled away there came every day,
The query "well, well, have you heard—
No word from John?" and the answer thereon,
"Not a word, not a word, not a word!"

Amid all this yearning the birds were returning—
And the trees putting forth their new leaves—
The robin-red breast, to her apple-tree-nest,
And the swallow to hers 'neath the eaves.

Far away was the storm, air balmy and warm,
And fireless stood the old stove;
Birds crooned in the shade or sang in the glade,
And the turtledove sighed in the grove.

Farm labor went on, but not as when John
Took the lead, all faithful and true;
On hoe, fork, or plow, leaned the laborer now,
As if all at a loss what to do.

Said one of the brothers—the wag of all others—
"E'en the frogs down there in the pond,
Aside from all joking, seem, to ask in their croaking,
Where's John? Where's John? Where's John?

While the prig little devils, in their twilight revels,
More noisy than all the rest,
In their jabb'ring, sonorous, unmusical chorus,
Seem to answer, "gone west, gone west."

At the chill close of day, near the middle of May,
When the ingle was fitfully gleaming,
By the homestead-hearth, as if weary of earth,
Sat the father of John, half dreaming.

In a little back room, in sorrow and gloom,
And now and then heaving a sigh,
Sat the mother of John with the nameless one,
While sobbing a sad lullaby.

Round the rude kitchen-fire in play-day attire,
The young folk were, leisurely sitting,
For, upon that day,* 'twas the old-time way,
Not e'en to be sewing or knitting.

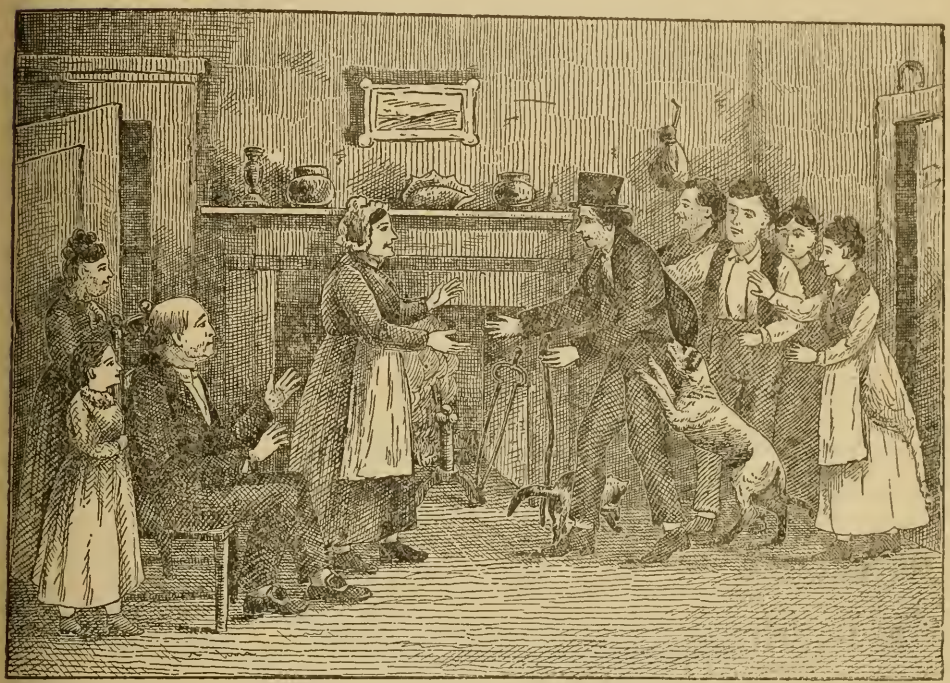
On the porch Taus' was lying half whining, half crying
For Tip, who was seven days dead;
And, as if half afraid, he tremblingly bayed,
But nothing was thought o't, nor said.

The silence was broken by a hopeless word spoken—
"Poor John! we shall ne'er see him more!"
Scarce spoken the word, when, lo! there was heard
A soft, gentle rap at the door.

"Come in!" said the sire who sat by the fire,
And an ill-boding tremor crept o'er him—
The door opened wide, and o'erwhelmed, he cried,
"Why, John!" as his son stood before him!

*Ascension Day.

O, it's John ! it is John ! shouted every one—
His mother rushed forward to meet him—
"The dead's alive ! the lost is found !"
Was the joyful sound that echoed all round,
And the dog and the cat helped to greet him.



With breath almost bated they told and repeated
How long they had looked for and missed him ;
They laughed and they cried, in welcomes they vied,
And they fell on his neck and they kissed him.

A homely old maid who had somewhat overstaid
Her call, still lingered and tarried,
And before she retired quite quaintly inquired
Whether John was still single, or married.

John's answer—"*still* single," seemed to make her ears twingle,
And her cheek blushed as red as could be;
Yes, it blushed cherry-red, as she hopefully said,
"Then there *still* is a chance for me!"

When thoroughly greeted and finally seated,
And hat, pack, and cane put away,
And he seemed so tired, his father inquired—
"Why, John, did you walk all the way?"

The answer was brief—"spite Gypsy and thief,
Ill fortune, ill favor, and fate,
Gypsy song, Gypsy blarney, I recaptured my Barney,
And he's tethered out there, to the gate."

Then followed a shout, as the youngsters ran out
Toward the gate 'twixt the lane and the stable;
And Tauser went skelping and joyfully yelping,
But the noise woke the child in the cradle.

At the cry of a child John stared and looked wild—
To him, like a death-shriek it sounded;
Turning pale as a sheet, he heard his heart beat,
As he sat, for a moment, dumbfounded.

Having stilled its alarms, with the child in her arms,
Before him his mother stood, weeping,
As she trembling said, "while we thought *you* were dead,
The Lord trusted *this* to be my keeping."

As their color returned John's cheeks fairly burned—
As when innocence blushes at crime—
And he scarcely knew what—but he suddenly thought
Of a child being born out of time.

While the sire, all hoary, tried to tell him the story
Of the Gypsies, the horse, and the child,
The youngsters rushed in to tell what they'd seen,
And the little one playfully smiled.

But, order restored, and the hearth-fire shored,
The table was hastily spread,
And filled with the best for the wight from the West,
Now placed in the seat at the head.

But, amid all this cheer, all were anxious to hear
What John had to tell of his trip—
Where, all, he had been, what, all, he had seen,
And *how* Barney gave him the slip.

And they showed him the letter—the mysterious letter—
Which the rustic had brought to the door,
But as he read o'er it, he said—perhaps swore it—
That he never had seen it before!

Nor aught did he know about "Circleville, O.,"
Or the country or people around it;
He could truthfully swear he had never been there,
Notwithstanding the letter so sounded.

"Get facts from the West before you invest—
Divide all big stories by seven;"
But one thing was true as every one knew—
That the stars had fallen from heaven.

And he told them the tale of his ride through the vale,
How he fared the first night at the inn;
Of the gallant old Scott, and the man who had sought
To tempt him to drink and to sin.

Of his ride up the mountain, how the snakes gathered round him,
And his horse had arisen on wings;
How westward he soared, how it thundered and poured,
And—many more wonderful things—

Of his stay at the inn in the dark mountain glen
Where the host and his harpies had robbed him;
How he was humbugged, how his horse had been drugged,
And the Gypsies had shaven and bobbed him.

What terrible sights he had witnessed o'nights—
What a hell the old Englishman kept;
Of the dance of the witches, the bogles and bitches
In the room of the inn where he slept.(?)

He told of the trade, or the sale, he had made
Of his horse to the villainous Gypsy,
But not the least word in all this was heard
That when selling the horse John was tipsy.

How the old Gypsy hag with the wand and the bag
Had read from the palm of his hand
That his fortune was east and not in the West,
And that he was born to command.

While the young Gypsy-maid had sung him and played,
How charmed and bewitch'd he had been,
But avoided with care the young love affair
He had with the maid of the inn.

He told them about his journey on foot
O'er the mountains and hills, all alone,
And how on his way, at dusk on that day,
His heart turned and hankered for home.

Should he turn his face east, or journey on west—
Retrace his steps now, or advance?
How he set up his cane near the mouth of the lane
And left the whole matter to Chance.

How the fall of the cane indicated the lane
As a middle course safe to be taken;
So believing, he took it, though rugged and crooked
For, in chance work, his faith was unshaken.

And how, at the end, an old farmer friend
So kindly had taken him in,
And there at farm-labors for "thee" and "thy" neighbors,
For almost a year he had been.

But he certainly thought that of all this he ought
To have written, and was to be blamed;
Bu he answered and said, as he hung down his head,
That to write he was too much ashamed.

And he went on to tell of the pleasures, as well,
Of a life far away in the mountains;
Of the "Blue Juniata," of the weird "Alfarata."[64]
And her image still seen in the fountains.

And he told them a tale of the sorrowful wail
Of a mother heart broken and wild,
On the banks of that river, of her weeping on ever,
Still mourning the loss of her child.

How, late in October, the Rommany rover,
In the dusk of a dull, dreary, day,
While the child was alone, had stealthily gone
And stolen her dear boy away!

And how, later on, he and others had gone
To recapture the child by main force;
How their main purpose failed, he fully detailed,
And how he recaptured his horse.

From all blame absolved—a mystery solved—
How the foundling was hid in the stable—
And honored two-fold, like a brave knight of old,
John appeared at the head of the table.

'Twas now late at night, while dim was the light,
And fainter the embers were gleaming;
Each sleep-heavy head was, at last, found abed
Indulging in slumbers and dreaming.

For several days, the fields, paths, and ways
Around where the old mansion stood,
Were trodden by scores of comers and goers
To see and to hear all they could.

To each set, moreover, the tale was told over
And over, it must be confessed,
Until the rude tale had grown dull and stale—
Of John and his trip to the West.

Some advised—in advance—that he write a romance,
And, thus, get himself a great name,
E'en though he should not, like the great Walter Scott,
Get with it, great fortune(?) and fame.

* * * *

Ere May passed away, John remounted his bay
And took the lost boy on before him—
Both arrayed in their best, and he hied away west—
To his mother, full bent, to restore him.

There were doubtings and fears and not a few tears
When the foundling was taken away:
There were kisses and cares and many warm prayers,
For safety and luck by the way.

* * * *

As becometh good wit, we here, shall omit
The details of this second trip west:—
Let us save our young hero—our would be caballero,
For, the least said, peradventure, the best.

Suffice it to say, that on the fifth day
His friends were astonished to find him
Come riding that way on his gallant young bay
With the maid of the inn on behind him!

Not only astounded, but, indeed, sorely wounded
Were his parents, his sisters and brothers;
But the weight of such trouble seems destined to double
On the hearts of their authors' poor mothers.

But the young stranger-maid proved so steady and staid,
And, withal, so lovely that, soon
They were all reconciled and they treated the child
Like the foundling—as one of their own.

One bright, sunny day, near the close of mild May,
The homestead was crowded again,
And the preacher was there to unite the young pair—
Our hero and the maid of the inn.

And they feasted and drank, made merry and danced,
And they had an old-time jubilee,
While the preacher declared that it, really, appeared
That it all was decreed so to be.

The Tams and the Dicks who had played him such
tricks
And left him *sans* trappings and mare,
Agreed with him, quite, but advised him that night
Of the witches and goblins beware.

Mid the mirth of the throng John sang them a song
Of how by the Fate he was driven
Back to his old home, ne'er from it to roam,
And the words of it, here, shall be given.

Long hid in yonder mountain-nook,—
My gallant bay once once more
I mounted, and to wings he took,
And eastward did he soar.

Ho, eastward, ho my trusty boy,
Keep steady on the wing,
And hie me to the East, away,
And heed me while I sing.

As Moses viewed the promised land,
I almost viewed the West.
But Fate forbade to enter, and—
What Fate decrees is best.

Yon' mountain heights before me rose
Like barriers in my way,
And even Chance, consulted chose
My westward steps to stay.

O'er hills and mountain-top we soar,
And 'neath yon' cloudless sky,
I view th' enchanted vale once more—
There let me live and die!

Enough of this wide world I've seen,
Of travel, tricks, and trade;
Quite long enough from home I've been,
And now my fortune's made.

No caravan from India's shore
E'er crossed the desert-sands
With greater real wealth in store
Than she who by me stands;

Nor miner ever delved and wrought,
Nor ship e'er plowed the sea,
And home more precious treasure brought
Than Mary is to me.

O, what are gold and honors worth?
Let gold and honors tell;
Domestic bliss is heaven on earth—
Without it, home is hell.

All hail, once more, my native home!
My heart still clings to thee;
Again to thee, to stay, I come—
The West may wait for me.

Ere the next training-day—in the following May—
In the course of events it so happened,
Though all unexpected, that John was elected
To the office of cavalry captain.

So the dusky old hag of the wand and the bag
Said true, when she read from his hand—
"Your fortune lies east and not in the West,
You were born not to serve, but command."

And so what she read, or what she had said
Of birds that migrate in the spring—
That they seldom stay long, no matter where gone,
But are apt to remain on the wing.

And even the ox that on Christmas-night talks,
With the spirit of prophecy on him—
"Though weeping endure for a night, be assured
That joy will return with the morning."

In the union thus made the foundation was laid
Of a household all honored and true—
Of sons and of daughters who, like their forefarthers
To fortune and influence grew.

And their offspring survive and they prosper and thrive
At the close of this, rude, rustic tale,
While he who went west and his loved Mary rest
Near an old-time church* in the vale.

*Known in the olden time as Fisher's Church.

OTHER POEMS.

THE BUILDERS AND THE BIRDS.

FROM my chamber-window, eastward,
Just a little south of east,
Stood a long deserted mansion,
Built by builders long deceased,
Waiting for some willing tenant,
Who the house might lease or buy,
But noone would buy or rent it,
For the price was thought too high.

So, this old time house, deserted,
Waited patiently, the while,
Till it, too, might be converted
Into a more modern style;
Dormer windows gaping grimly
From the oldtime peakéd roof,
And the weather beaten chimney
To the weather standing proof.

There, the twittering chimney swallows—
Tenants of this house, alone,
In the chimney, dark and hollow,
Dwelt as if it were their own;
There, on many a summer evening,
As the shadows longer grew,
I watched the spiral host decending,
Entering the chimney-flue.

There, at summer-evening twilight,
In the slime-built swallow's nest,
Neath the overarching skylight,
Found the weary swallows rest;
And in cornice-niches narrow,
Snugly 'neath the antique eaves,
Nestled was the sleeping sparrow,
Sheltered by the ivy leaves.

But, when cooler nights of autumn
O'er the earth their mantle spread,
To the land whence summer brought them,
All the chimney-swallows fled;
While the sparrows, persevering,
Irrepressible and bold,
Never frost nor winter fearing,
Neath the eaves maintained their hold;

Till, at length, one autumn morning,
In this blessed year of grace,
When the swallows, taking warning,
Hastily had left their place;
But the sparrows still were clinging
To the ivy-sheltered eaves,
Or the soft materials bringing,
Building nests among the leaves,

Came the newsboy with "The Daily,"
Shivering in the pinching cold,
Singing—not so very gayly—
"The deserted house is sold!"
Then the neighbors stood and pondered
O'er this bit of morning news,
And the quizzing gossips wondered
What would be *tomorrow's* news.

On the morrow, bright and early,
By the morning's doubtful light,
Saw I, not so very clearly,
This, to me, astounding sight;
On the roof of the old mansion,
Toiled three stout and burly men,
Razing shingles, laths and stanchions—
Then I looked and saw again,

On the trees and 'round them flying,
Flocks of those imported "pests,"—
Sparrows, piteously crying
O'er their little ruined nests!
But the workmen went on toiling,
In the modernizing cause,
Other builders' labors spoiling,
Till the mansion roofless was.

Then I looked again and wondered,
What the change that had been planned;
Then I saw the piles of lumber,—
Lumber, bricks, and lime and sand;
Then it was I ceased to wonder,
What the change was going to be,
Or, (though it should be a blunder,)
What concern it was to me.

They are going to raise a story—
Three are "stylisher" than two;
Then the thought at once came o'er me—
I will raise a story too;
And the builders went on working,
Piling bricks and mortar high,
And the sparrows went on chirping,
And methought I heard them cry;

"When you build that *big* new cornice,
Don't forget to leave a space
In between each *little* cornice,
That we too may find a place;
For we claim a habitation
And an honest living here;
Listen to the exhortation,
And remember what you hear."

"In the holy words of JESUS,
Have you never heard or read,
Of the eye that ever sees us—
What the blessed Saviour said?
Hear the lesson, then, ye builders,
Though we are of little worth,
Never, without Heaven wills it,
Falls a sparrow to the earth."

"Yea, the sparrow and the swallow,
(Hear it from the sacred word)
Find a house among the hollows
Of the altars of the Lord;
There, within those niches narrow,
Of the holy temples high,
Live the swallows and the sparrows,
'Neath the Heavenly Father's eye."

"Then, if God himself allows us,
In his sacred courts to live,
Why should man in earthly houses,
Equal space refuse to give?
But the builders, ever speeding,
Went on, upward, day by day,
Singing, whistling, never heeding,
What the sparrows had to say:

'Till the first snow of November
Put the builders to the proof,
And the first day of December
Found the house without a roof:
Then the builders stood dumbfounded,
While the sparrows round them flocked,
And the builders stood confounded,
While the sparrows chirped and mocked;

Saying, "builders, Heaven has taught you,
'Ill the wind that blows no good,'
Piteously we besought you,
While the old-time mansion stood."
But the builders, bold and fearless,
Of the winter's ice and snow,
'Mid the prospect, dark and cheerless,
Stood and said "'tis even so."

Not a sparrow would assist them,
Though it seemed a little mean;
Once again, I looked, but missed, them—
Not a builder to be seen.
Bravely had the builders striven
To redeem their plighted words,
But the voice of fate had given
Full possession to the birds!

Then the birds were chirping inside—
Fluttering, hopping, dancing 'round,
While the builders lingered outside,
Standing on the frozen ground:
Then there came a change of weather,
After snow and storm and rain,
Then the builders came together
And began to build, again.

Faithfully they toiled and labored,
And the sparrows once more fled,
But the weather briefly favored,
While the evening skies were red:
First I saw a single rafter
Rising on the finished wall,
And not many hours after,
There I saw the rafters all.

Quick the sheeting-boards were added,
Barring out the wintry blast,
Then the merry builders shouted
"It is under roof at last!"
But the building days were over—
Redness in the morning sky!
Well, the house was under cover,
For the storm was wild and high.

Still, the house was far from finished—
Gaping windows without glass;
Liberty was undiminished
For the "little pests" to pass;
But, this snowy day—Thanksgiving,
We enjoy a rich repast,—
Men are sumptuously living,
While the little sparrows fast.

Who has been the greater sinner,
Little sparrow, you or I?
Why have I a bounteous dinner,
While you're left to starve and die?
Come, then, busy little builders,
From the greatest to the least,
Come, and welcome, with your children,
Join me in my sumptuous feast.

Learn this lesson, *all* we builders,
From the sparrow's wiser ways :—
Build our houses, raise our children
In the long, bright *summer*-days.

SUMMER EVENING.

(*The first eight stanzas are from Hebel's "Sommerabend."*)

BEHOLD the weary setting sun,
Whose labors of the day are done,
Now, in the radiant, glowing West,
Beyond the mountains sinks to rest;
He smiles "good-day" and veils his face
With Fazoletto—cloud-worked lace.

O, what a wondrous, weary time
He's had, the heavenly heights to climb!
Imparting warmth with ardent ray,
And life and light the livelong day;
O'er hill and dale and land and sea,
All Nature shared his blessings, free.

Full many a flower, in light or shade,
His power in gorgeous tints arrayed,
And many a bee in thirst and heat,
Has drawn therefrom the nectar, sweet;
While humbler insects, waiting, stood
T' enjoy the bee's neglected food.

From many a tiny opening shell
The ripen'd seeds in myriads fell,
While flocks of feeding, chirping birds
Hovered around the grazing herds;
Then, in the hedge, with craws well filled,
At close of day, their warblings trilled.

Full many a peach and apple, too,
His pencil touched with rosy hue;
In field and forest—hill and dale—
On mountain height, in lowly vale,
Full many a tree and many a vine
He clothed in beauty all divine.

* * * *

O, wondrous truth! O, wondrous tale!
In many a field, in many a vale—
Where e'er the hayers toiled and mowed,
His generous heat incessant glowed;
At morn, the grass in green swaths lay,
At e'en, on heaps of fragrant hay.

No wonder that he's growing dim,
And needs, to sleep, no evening hymn;
But as he silently retires,
His mellow'd light still tints the spires;
The world, he never fails to greet
With "farewell! be your slumbers sweet."

From hill-top and and from mountain height
Slow fades his soften'd ling'ring light,
And as it faint and fainter grows,
A many a good-night kiss he throws;
Then, robed in Evening's azure gown,
He draws his crimson curtains 'round.

Full twenty million miles away
Fair Venus smiles at close of day;
O, vesper light, O, Love's bright star,
Why dost thou make thy way so far
From Earth? and from the Sun,
Still millions more, thy journey run?

I care not what those millions mean
Twixt thee and me, thou vestal queen;
Since what the poets say is true—
That distance but enchants the view;
Shine on, shine on, ethereal gem,
In Love's imperial diadem.

In silent chambers of the West
The weary sun has sunk to rest;
Behold, the eastern hills aboon,
The pale light of the silvery moon!
With modest mien and mood she hies
To make her journey through the skies.

Slowly she climbs the azure steeps,
While in her sheen the landscape sleeps;
Before her light the stars grow dim,
And curfew-bell and vesper-hymn
Call Vesta to infold the fires,
And weary *man* to rest retires.

And when at life's last close of day
Th' immortal spark shall take its way
To some bright orb in realms above—
Perhaps to thee, thou star of love—
Who knows, sweet Venus, but in thee
Its final, heavenly rest will be?

THE STURDY OAKS OF STONY-BROOK.

And ye are strong to shelter !—all meek things
All that need home and covert, love your shade !
Birds of shy song, and low-voiced, quiet springs,
And nun-like violets, by the wind betrayed.
Childhood beneath your fresh, green tents hath played
With his first primrose wealth ; there Love hath sought
A veiling gloom for his unuttered thought ;
And silent grief, of days keen glare afraid,
A refuge for her tears ; and ofttimes there
Hath lone devotion found a place for prayer—
A native temple solemn, hushed, and dim ;
For wheresoe'er your murmuring tremors thrill
The woody twilight, there man'sheart hath still
Confessed a spirit's breath, and heard a ceaseless hymn.
—*Mrs. Hemans.*

YE sturdy oaks of Stony Brook,
Rare relics of a passing race,
Long have you held this sylvan nook—
A weird, enchanted place.

Is there a parchment, quaint and old,
All gray with dust and gnawed by mice,
That tells the right by which ye hold
This rugged paradise ?

Is it fee tail, or simple fee,
By forfeiture for debt or crime ?
Or holds the ancient forest-tree
By root and lapse of time ?

Ye sturdy tenants, fresh and green,
No matter what your title be,
Your holding here hath ever been
A pleasant mystery.

The woodman's axe, for ages past
Has leveled forests all around;
Yet ye, like veterans, to the last,
Still bravely hold your ground.

And near the brook the smithy stands—
Pray, doth the smith still sing and pray?
If so, why all those horse-shoe brands
To keep the d—l away?

How'er that be, the smith still sings,
Th'while his forge-fire flames and smokes,
And clear the anvil-chorus rings
Among the sturdy oaks.

Securely, there, the homestead hides
Beneath the crest of Stony-ridge;
And smoothly, here, the current glides
Beneath the old-time bridge.

The peasant's life as smoothly flows—
Unruffled as his youthful dreams—
And, happ'ly, he but little knows
The let of life's extremes.

An air of peace pervades the scene,
Indifferent, all, which way I look,
And oaks and cedars, dark and green,
Are mirror'd in the brook.

And here, in summer-days I'll come,
And with the birds I'll sit and sing,
Forgetful of both house and home,
Yet, happier than a king.

The distant landscape, grazing herds,
The fragrance of the wood and field,
The plowman's drawl, the song of birds,
A strange, sweet pleasure yield.

And if, perchance, while here, near by,
A woodman's axe shall startle me,
I'll raise my earnest voice and cry,
O, "woodman, spare that tree!"

Two hundred years and more ago,
There dropt to earth from lofty sire,
Some acorns which took root and grew
More stalwart, still, and higher.

Their roots were watered by this brook,
Formed by the springs far up the vale,
Emerging from the shady nook
Of robin, thrush, and quail.

Beneath the shelter of these oaks,
The Red men and their savage sires
Danced, whooped, and sent their curling smokes
Aloft from forest fires.

And here, among these oaken columns,
Supporting, each, a leafy dome,
In silence, both severe and solemn,
Was, once, the Indian's home.

This legend wild my grandsire told—
(Of such he had an ample store,)
About a child the Indians stole,
And never heard of more.

And how the mother wailed and wept
Until her hopeless heart was broke ;
And how, while all the household slept
She hanged upon an oak !

And how, when years and years had flown,
The night-winds or the evening gale
Came laden with that mother's moan
And that wild, hopeless, wail.

How Stony Brook in early days
Was one wild waste of plum and thorn,
Where, now, the herds in meadows graze
Mid fields of waving corn.

Ye silent oaks of Stony Brook,
Could ye but speak, what would ye tell?
Deep writ, within the oak-bound brook,
Rare, untold legends dwell.

No prophet, here, in linen stoled,
Beneath these oaks an altar reared,
Nor Druid priest with knife of gold
The mistletoe[64] prepared.

That magic All-Heal never grew
Upon these monarchs of the wood ;
No Pagan hand the white bulls slew,
Or sprinkled, here, their blood.

Nor did the serpent's egg e'er prove
Its magic power to stem this stream,[65]
As in the ancient Druid-grove
Where Hesus[66] reigned supreme.

But they who first this valley trod
Did build their twelve-stoned altars[67] here,
And to the true, but unknown God,
They sacrificed the deer.

Those scattered sons of a lost tribe—
Wild wand'rers toward the setting sun—
What sage historian shall describe
Their race, when fully run?

Soon shall they reach the narrow strait
O'er which the *savans* say they came;
When will they reach the golden gate—
The New Jerusalem?

O, wondrous Power, by whose right hand
All nations shall, at last, be free!
E'en th' savage seeks that better land
And final rest in Thee.

Here millions roamed and ruled and died
For eons on this continent,
Yet Fate's decree hath them denied
Both grave and monument.

We tread upon the charnel heap
At almost every step we take;
Untomb'd, e'en here, their dust shall sleep
Till Gabriel's trump shall wake.

The careless stream, still, bounds along,
Through meadows green, toward the sea,
And fertile fields all gay with song—
The Red Man ! where is he ?

The years rolled on, the white man came—
Intruder in this wild abode ;
The Red Man stood upon his claim,
And blood like water flowed.

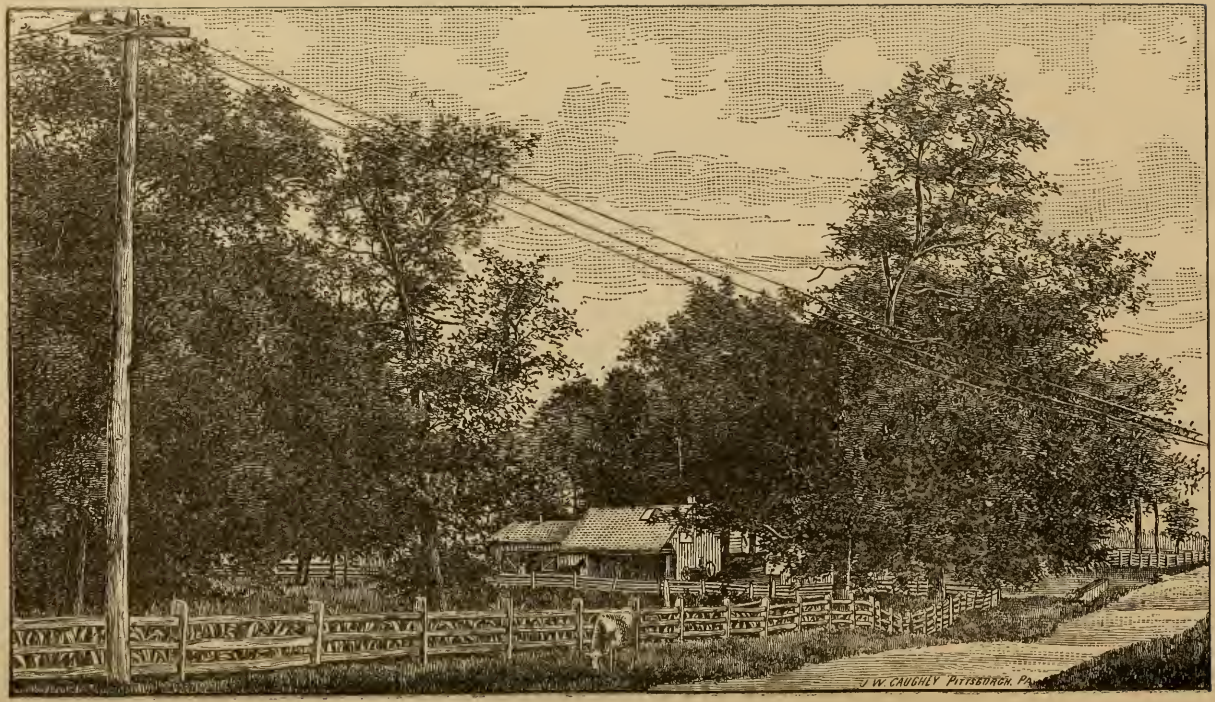
Athwart this clear and narrow flood,
The bullet met the arrow's gleam,
And civilized and savage blood
Flowed, mingled, down the stream.

Yea, here our stalwart fathers stood
Upon the banks of Stony-Brook,
And fought the Indians, blood for blood,
Till they their home forsook.

The savage beasts of horn and hoof
Declined the all-too-savage 'fray ;
A neutral power, kept well aloof,
Or frightened, ran away.

Our fathers, by their giant strength,
The forests felled, the homestead reared,
And through their patient toil, at length,
The waving fields appeared ;

And towns and cities followed fast,
And then, the wondrous turnpike roads,
O'er which the teamsters of the past
Hauled their enormous loads.


J W CAUGHEY PITTSBURGH PA

These sturdy oaks of Stony-Brook
Were giants long before that day,
When weary travelers rest, here took,
When passing o'er this way ;

And from this crystal brook they quaffed
And quenched their burning thirst, at ease.
With many a fresh and cooling draught,
Beneath these old oak trees.

A relic of an old-time inn,*
Quaint castle, time and weather-worn—
Still lingers there, almost within
A mile, all lone and lorn.

The Conestoga caravan,
Alas, shall here be seen no more
To rest, and water horse and man,
As in the days of yore.

The message, now, by lightning flies,
E'en flying steam is far too slow ;
Round earth the voice of knowledge cries—
To live is, now, to know.

Near by, in "times that tried men's souls,"
Th' equestrian, flying Congress, too,
Halted and drank from rustic bowls,
A hundred years ago.[68]

Though to that bourn whence none return,
Those iron-willed men have, long since, gone,
Yet now, as then, the bonny burn,
Heedless, meanders on.

*Now, The "Valley House."

True it may be, the "wanton trout"
Once sported in this "careless stream,"
Yet, Time the legend veils in doubt
And shades it like a dream.

Still, here they stand, these sturdy oaks,
As fresh and green as they were then,
Surviving all their oak-kin-folks
By full three score and ten :

Save one, the monarch of them all—
I blush to own, 'tis even so—
That noblest oak, so grand and tall,
By ruthless hands laid low.[69]

Within its life, think what hath been—
What mighty changes have occurred !
Greater, save one, than eye hath seen,
Or ear hath ever heard.

They sawed and cut that noble tree
And hauled its pond'rous trunk to mill
And there, as mill-shaft,[70] it may see
More revolutions still.

Though here no lover carved the name
Of lover, sweetheart, or of spouse,
Yet, rustic lovers hither came
And frolicked 'neath its boughs.

There live who lingered in its shade,
With dinner-basket, slate and book ;
There live, perchance, who truant played
And angled in the brook.

Few live who felled the forest walls
That once stood towering all around;
More sleep within the narrow halls
Of death, beneath the ground.

These ancient landmarks, now so rare,
O'er which the years their shadows cast—
A homestead-house, or tree, O, spare!
Each links us with the past.

Ye hale old oaks, may we inquire,
What lessons have ye for our youth—
To raise their moral standard higher?
Uprightness, Virtue, Truth.

"ONLY A CHILD."

(*From The German: Anon.*)

HASTILY the sexton labored
Digging 'neath the hemlock-trees,
As I strolled, one summer-evening,
Seeking the refreshing breeze;

And I asked him why he hasted,
As the clay he higher piled,
And the sexton curtly answered,
"It is only for a *child!*

But a *child* I here shall bury,
And the grave need not be big ;
Still I must be in a hurry—
Other graves I have to dig';
All of which must soon be finished."—
And the sexton strangely smiled,
As he hastily repeated—
"*This* one's only for a child !"

"*Only* for a child ! !" I shuddered,
As the man so gruffly spoke,
And I saw the mother, yonder,
Kneeling 'neath a gnarléd oak ;

While the sexton went on digging,
Came such wailings, loud and wild,
As come from a heart that's breaking,
For a mother's only child.

But a child ! yet, as it sickened,
And its blooming cheek grew pale,
And the filmy fluids gathered
O'er its vision, like a veil,—

Stood the grim and heartless monster—
King of Death's dark, shadowy land,
Ghastly, all-unsparing reaper,
Whetted sickle in his hand !

Who, that to that mother listened,
"*Only* a child," could e'er have said ?
All in vain her supplications,
And her last faint hope had fled ;

All in vain, her ardent struggle
To reclaim her only child;
Deeper, deeper, dug the sexton,
As the clay was higher piled.

Once, how happy was that mother!
Dear that treasure to her heart;
Now, with this one, and the *last* one—
Justice! Mercy! must she part?

In its life her own was hidden,
Reft of it, her heart *must* break;—
Peace, be still, is it not written,
"He that gave, shall He not take?"

"Only a child!" the last of seven!
Wonder not that heart should break,—
Peace, be still; of such is heaven—
"He that gave, shall He not take?"

Methought I heard that poor heart's throbbings
As the sexton's work went on;
But, at length, in sighs and sobbings,
Came the words, "*Thy will be done!*"

STORM AND CALM.

HARK, how the fierce winds blow—a fearful gale!
See how the flakes of snow o'er hill and dale
Are swept before the blast, from North and West,
Till wearied out, at last, they sink to rest.

One hour the skies are dark and tempest roar;
How will our fragile bark e'er reach the shore?
Anon, the sun breaks forth, the spirit yearns,
Blue skies are in the North, and hope returns.

So are the storms of life we daily face,
In this rude world of strife and meager grace;
Toss'd rudely by the storms, till, at its close,
Our wornout mortal forms find sweet repose.

AN AUTUMN REVERIE.

IN dark, dense foliage stood the trees arrayed,
On distant hill, and in the nearer vale,
Alone and pensive, on the sunny glade,
Or, clustered in the cool, sequester'd dale.

Along the softly gliding, winding stream,
Or by the ever charming meadow-brook,
Where lovesick swain, or poet, loves to dream
Away his troubles, in some shady nook:

There did the feathered artists build their nests—
Brood o'er, beget, and rear their tender young;
There did the airy minstrels plume their crests
And teach their children the sweet art of song.

* * * *

But let me now my dreamy thoughts pursue,
And see whereto my reverie shall tend;
My thoughts take on a sad autumnal hue,
For in each falling leaf I lose a friend.

Farewell to glorious Indian-summer days—
To nodding plumes of gorgeous golden rod ;
To hazy air, and mild autumnal rays—
Blest season of the Indian-summer god.*

Farewell to golden and to crimson leaf,
To fragrant flower and to singing bird,
Whose welcome stay, alas, was all too brief,
And chirping sparrows, now, alone are heard.

Here, in the ivy, at my gable-wall—
Their winter quarters, 'neath the waxy leaves ;
Their strawbuilt cottages, deserted, fall
In tattered fragments from the corniced eaves.

The rough and ruthless, chill, November blest
Has swept o'er mountain, hill, and fertile plain ;
The fell destroyer, Death, has come at last,
And leaves lie scattered like the battle-slain.

How, late, upon the stately maple, here,—
That shades my window in the summer-days,
At night, the mellow leaves, though sad and sere,
Were golden in the light of Luna's rays.

It rains, it rains, and as the waters flow
In murky streamlets past my cottage-door,
In groups, my leafy friends set sail and go
To join the myraids that have gone before.

Here, 'round me clustered, on my chamber-walls—
A gather'd few—I love to look upon ;
Mementos dear, that, ever, and anon, recall
Some valued friend, long fallen, dead and gone !

*Cantantowit.

O'er them no more November's gales shall sweep—
Safe are they, now, from Winter's killing blast;
And ah! how fresh, and sweetly green they keep
The memory of a glorious summer, past!

'Tis sad to contemplate the leaf's decay—
Yea, sad the lesson of a life so brief;
'Tis sadder, still, to read, as mortals may,
Their own life's story in the fallen leaf.

Still, clings the ivy to the gable-wall—
Sweet, vernal emblem of immortal youth!
And, from the depths of those dark shadows, all,
Shines forth the light of God's life-giving truth;

Which, from the Leaves of Life, one reads to me—
I hear a voice! a voice! as from on high—
It wakes me from my death-like reverie—
"Believe on ME, and thou shalt never die!"

WINTER.

CALM was the eve and starlight,
The winds, without a sigh,
Seemed sleeping soft and child-like,
As to a lullaby.

The old, old, azure dome-work
Glittered with golden spray,
And like a pathway homeward,
The old, old, milky way.[71]

From Jupiter to Venus—
All in the world of light—
Like the golden chain between us,
So ever pure and bright.

And gazing on the star-king,
Many a toiler sank to rest,
Softly as many a darling,
In a mother's arms caressed.

While mortals, thus, were sleeping,
Calm as a summer-sail,
Eolus, softly creeping,
Breathed forth a misty veil.

O'er all that starlight' azure—
O'er all that golden sheen,
So dark was the erasure,
That not a star was seen.

The day came with the dawning,
But with a light subdued,
The air was full of warning,
The sun in gloomy mood.

I missed the cheerful ringing
From chanticleer's first crow,
And from the maiden's singing
The rhythm and the flow.

At windows and at door-ways
There were portentious jars,
Cold drafts along the stair-ways
And creaks among the spars.

Then, as if within an hour,
The stars, so late aglow,
Some mighty, magic power
Had turned to flakes of snow,

Came the myriad fleecy crystals,
As if by magic strewn,
Or when the down of thistles
By autumn winds is blown.

O ! Winter, still, I love thee,
With all thy raging storms,
Thy breath, though cold and chilly,
The heart of friendship warms.

The storm-king raging 'round us,
But makes us more akin ;
As in days of yore it bound us
Round the blazing hearth within.

Ye Powers that rule above us,
Leave us this noblest part—
The friends that truly love us—
The sunshine of the heart.

THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS, (1885.)

ITS bright sunny days I shall never forget—
Fond memory will, still, ponder o'er them ;
While my heart shall be sad and filled with regret,
That no power can ever restore them.

Were they lent by November because he could spare them—
Or, some other neighborly reason ?—
That the holiday-hosts of December might share them,
Though they came a whole month out of season?

Old Boreas, king of the winds, took repose,
On his tower, far off, in old Hellas ;
Unmoved hung his beard, and pale was his nose,
And flat were the cheeks of his bellows.

Not a snow had he cast nor an ice-bridge sprung,
And, autumnal looked fields, hills, and mountains;
Not a window frescoed nor an icicle hung
From the eaves, or the clear, sparkling fountains.

Almost like the days, so bright were the nights—
Full-orbed, was the fair, lovely Luna ;
Her dome-crowned cathedral was a-twinkle with lights,
And undimmed by a cloud, or corona.

One star stood alone in the far distant East,
O'er the land of sweet song and old story;
'Twas the bright star of HIM—the earnest of peace,—
Who shall, yet, fill the earth with His glory.

With great preparations the world was astir,
As the time-honored ways had appointed;
And the worshipers came with frankincense and myrrh,
To receive and adore God's ANOINTED.

And the little ones, too, in their innocent glee,
With a thousand and one queer devices,
Came gath'ring 'round—some, their *first* Christmas-tree,
All fragrant with odors and spices.

But what were all these and the evergreen trees,
And the trinkets and tinsel there flaunting?
And, even, the penance of low-bended knees,
If the soul of devotion was wanting?

O, this bright Christmas-day! would it ever could stay,
And from earth sin and sorrow were driven,
But e'en as it is, sweet childhood is gay,
And is dreaming of no better Heaven.

When the aged, still here, in this year eighty-five,
Shall have passed beyond life's waning isthmus,
May the young of to-day, still happy, survive,
And remember this bright, "Merry Christmas."

THE OLD APPLE-TREE.

(*Lines suggested by its recent removal.*)

FROM a wee, tiny seed thou wast grown—
Thou, too, hadst thy childhood and youth,
An age almost equal my own
And a name quite as honored, in sooth.

Thou ne'er didst encumber the ground—
Thine was not the barren tree's doom,
For as often as May-day came round
Thou wast crowned with a wealth of sweet bloom.

Like a picture of Peace in relief,
Or, a full-blown, dear, old-fashioned rose—
An arboreal, great, floral sheaf,
Or a statue of Love in repose.

O, queen of the old apple-trees!
In the first of sweet Summer's bright days,
What an Eden for birds and for bees,
And for Childhood's mock mimicking plays!

In the branches were built the rude nests,
Softly cushioned with feathers and hair;
Ah, how many dear robin-red breasts
Might sing of a birth-place up there!

Of a homestead so airy and high,
The fruits, leaves and blossoms among,
And a many a sweet, soft, lullaby,
Where the matins and vespers were sung.

At the close of a calm summer-day,
As the sun sank to rest in the sea,
How oft' was I lulled by the lay
And the song in the old apple-tree!

How oft', in my musings and dreams,
(Of which, perhaps, only too fond,)
Have such sights and such sounds given gleams
Of the life and the land, still beyond.

But, alas, when the birds shall return
And the children revisit the lawn,
How sad will they be when they learn
That their kindly old shelter is gone!

In the nursery, too, it was trained
For a useful—a fruitful, long life,
And for sixty long years it remained,
'Till with wrinkles and gnarls it was rife.

All lovely in age as it proved,
Old Time brought the fateful decree—
"Let the old apple-tree be removed
To make room for the coming young tree."

The stout hands that planted thee there,
Old tree, have gone back to old Earth,
And thy limbs and thy body, once fair,
Soon to ashes will turn on the hearth.

And when, thus, cremated thou art,
Those ashes shall sleep in an urn,
But thy image shall live in my heart,
'Till to ashes it, too, shall return.

"THE HOMESTEAD."

(On reading Whittier's deserted New England "Homestead.")

NOT so my homestead, gentle friend,
Is overshadowed by a gloom;
That dreary picture *so* well penned,
Is not *my* childhood's home.

"Against the barren hills" thine "stands,
Ghost of a *dead* home, staring through
Its broken lights on wasted lands
Where old-time harvests *grew*"

But come, my friend, I bid thee, come,
Turn from New England's barren hills,
I'll show thee an old Keystone-home,
One's heart with pleasure fills.

Against the hillside, too, it stands,
O'erlooking all the vale below,
Where, on the fair and fertile lands
The waving harvests grow.

No "unploughed, unsown," or "unshorn,
Or poor, forsaken fields," here lie,
But rich and rife with wheat and corn,
As in the days gone by.

With "healthful herbs and flowers" rare,
A "house-wife, still, the garden keeps;"
No "weeds or tangle flourish" there,
Nor snake thereunder creeps.

A lilac-bush still blooms and sways
And shades the threshold and the door;
The roses bloom e'en in these days
As in the days of yore.

No "track in mould of dust and drouth,
On floor or hearth the squirrel leaves;"
Nor "in a fireless chimney's mouth
His web the spider weaves."

Though no old "barn about to fall,
Resounds with mirth on husking eves,
More "cattle low in yard and stall,"
Though "threshers beat no sheaves."

Of real flesh and blood we boast—
No "haunting presence makes its sign,"
And down yon lovely lane no ghost
Dare, here, "drive spectral kine."

O, homestead, more than ever dear,
As memories closer cling to thee,
We gather and recount them here,
Beneath the homestead-tree.

We never *left* "the ancestral soil
For noisome mill or chaffering store;"
We "gird our loins for sturdy toil"
And love the homestead more.

We love "the bayberry-scented slopes,
The fragrant fern and ground-mat vine"—
To "breathe airs blown o'er holt and copse
Sweet with black birch and pine."

We have and love our meadows, gay—
All starr'd with gowans, bright as gold;
Though Youth romps not on haying-day
As in the days of old.

Our hills and valleys clothed with corn,
Our harvest-fields of golden grain,
Though winds, no more, the harvest-horn,
And never may, again.

(The greedy grasp of your *machine*
Has choked the charms of rural life
Mangled and marred the harvest-scene
With ruthless reaper-knife).

Nor are our labors' gains so small—
They more than pressing wants supply;
Besides, we have the wherewithal
Some luxuries to buy.

More than "the many dollar'd-crave—
Those brick-wall'd slaves of trade and mart"—
Besides all that, we, rustics have
The sunshine of the heart.

Our "own sole masters, freedom-will'd,
With none to bid us go or stay,"
We "till the fields our fathers tilled—
More skilfully than they.

Their "axe the walls of forest broke,"—
They built the grand old homestead, too;
And our young house-wife sends the smoke
Up the same chimney-flue.

Yes, "rustic lovers hither came,
And maidens swaying back and forth,
In rhythmic grace at wheel and loom
Made light their toil with mirth."

"Still comes the swain of rural birth,"
The rustic maiden, here, to court,
But finds her "swaying back and forth"
At the *pianoforte;*

At organ, harp, or sew-machine,
A novel, or a book of poems—
Bent on what pleasure she may glean
From Whittier, Saxe, or Holmes.

Still "child, feet patter on the stair"—
More softly than in days of yore—
For, now, there's carpet everywhere,
Then none, e'en on the floor.

Still, "boyhood frolics in the snow"—
Boys will be boys in spite of all—
As you and I, long, long ago—
Brave knights of bat and ball.

Boys must be boys before they're men,
No matter what the poets say;
O, would that we were boys again,
As in life's holiday.

"Gray age," that in her arm-chair sat,
Knitting and rocking to and fro,
Hath long since passed away to that
Same heaven, we hope to go.

But, in that same old easy chair,
Which love and care have kept like new,
Now sits a mother, hale and fair,
Though gently ageing, too.

Full many a homestead, old and quaint,
From hill and dale and valley smiles,
Remodeled, dressed in glass and paint,
Abreast with modern styles.

And in those homesteads you may find
The old-time clock still on the stair,
And other heirlooms that remind
Us of the days that were.

Old Time's kaleidoscope still reels,
And many an antique view presents—
Our girls use grandma's spinning-wheels
For parlor ornaments.

Yes, mother-land, thou still may'st boast
Of those "far, off who strive and thrive,"
Rememb'ring that "each swarming host,"
Forms a new, prosperous "hive."

While we with skill that helps our hands,
And all the "aid that science brings,"
Still farm our grand old homestead lands
"And reign thereon as kings."

THE OLD OAKEN FARM-HOUSE.

FAREWELL to the old oaken farm-house—
"Sweet home" in the beautiful vale,
To the scene of my youth and my childhood,
How sad 'tis to say it—farewell!

Farewell to its moss-covered shingles,
Its rafters, its girders, and beams,
But leave me the hallowed memories
That haunt me so oft' in my dreams.

Farewell to its hearth-stone and ingles—
To the shadows on ceiling and floor,
To its halls, its chambers and closets,
And the latch on the old oaken door.

Farewell to the old oaken stairway—
To the landing above each rude flight—
To each step that led me to slumbers
On many a dark rainy night.

Farewell to the old oaken hand-rail,
Adown which I once loved to slide,
Without saddle, or stirrup, or bridle,
And thought it a glorious ride.

Farewell to the rugged stone chimney,
That clung to the old gable-end;
In memory I still see, but dimly,
The blue, curling vapors ascend.

Farewell to the old rural kitchen—
That heaven on earth to the young;
To the cures for all care and affliction—
The fiddle, the dance, and the song.

From the top of the tow'ring old mountain,*
How enchanting the scene I behold—
The fields, the stream, and the fountain,
Unchanged as I saw them of old.

I see in the dim, hazy distance,
Far down the sweet, soft, sunny glade,
The old oak and the wide-spreading chestnut,
Where, in boyhood, I rambled and played.

How lonely the sycamore now seems,
That shaded the old oaken door,
Since the old oaken farm-house is torn down,
And its threshold invite me no more.

*Mont Alto.

In its stead there stands a new mansion,
All modern and modish of mould ;
It is all very stylish and handsome,
But my spirit still clings to the old.

* * * *

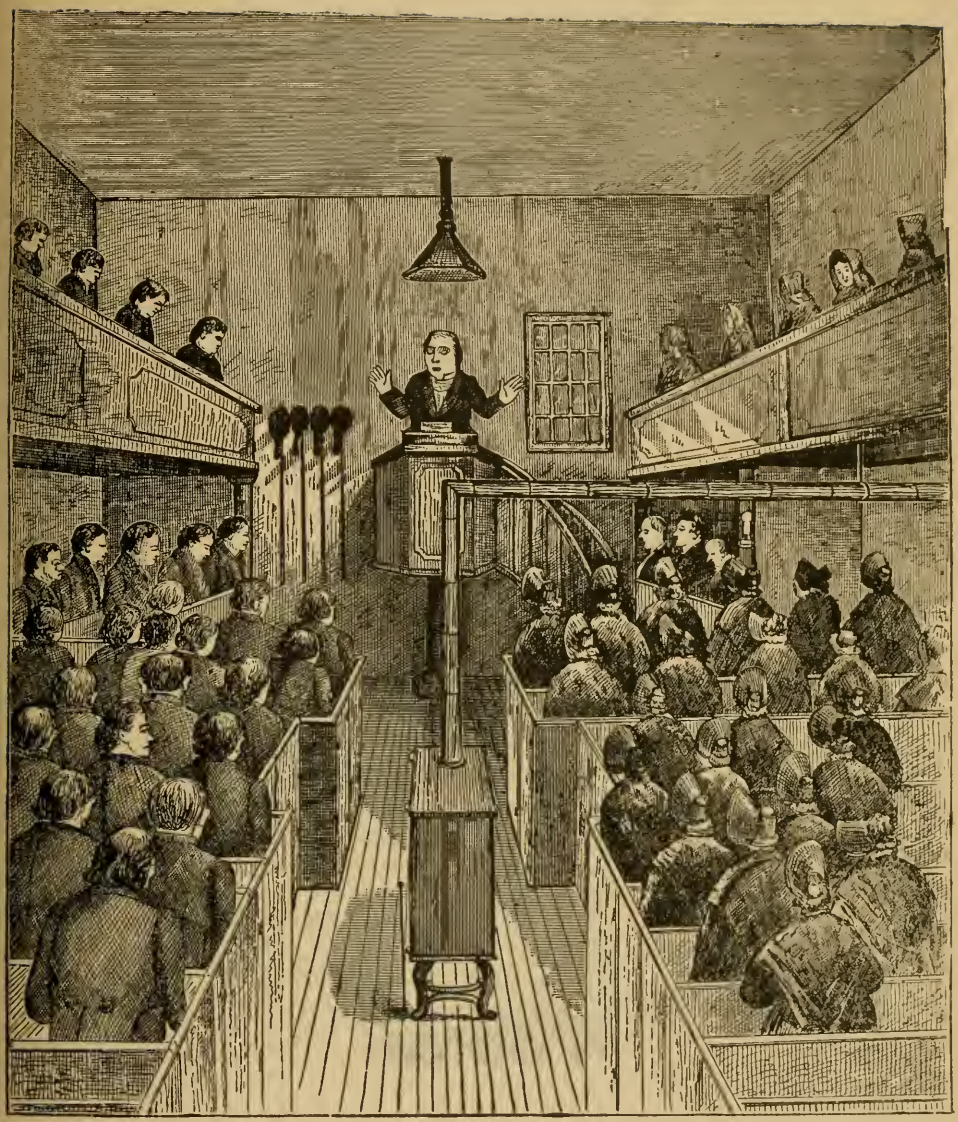
As the summer-winds sigh through the branches,
I'm reminded of days that are o'er ;
Farewell to the old oaken farm-house,
But leave me the old sycamore.

As the breezes sweep softly the foliage,
As Eolus, the strings of his lyre,
The forgotten come trooping around me,
And the muses my numbers inspire.

As a pilgrim well on in life's journey,
Let me linger once more in its shade,
While in sadness I muse on the changes
Which Time, Tide, and Fashion have made.

The sun shines as brightly as ever,
The fields and the flowers are as gay,
The songs of the birds are as merry,
But the friends of my youth, where are they ?

Some have gone to the land of the sun-set,
Some sleep 'neath the low myrtle's twine ;
But methinks their spirits still linger
Around this old, hallowed shrine.



O, the old-time church on the hill-side,
Though it had neither belfry nor bell,
And the old-fashioned, deep, solemn service,
Whose memories my bosom still swell.

In the pulpit, I still see the preacher,
And all things the old-fashioned way ;
I see and I hear, as he stood there,
With uplifted hands, "Let us pray!"

And close by the church the old school-house,
As it stood 'neath the wide-spreading trees,
And the dear old foot-beaten play-ground—
All vanished, yet, memory still sees.

All gone, save the myrtle-grown graveyard—
Most sacred of all sacred ground—
Where, in hope, the departed are resting,
And shall rest 'till the trumpet shall sound.

I go, but my eye wanders backwards,
Toward the spot where the sycamore stands,
Whilst my spirit is drawn gently upward,
Toward a house that was not made with hands.

APRIL.*

O, April, month of mystic naming,
In Roman time thou wast the second,
And 'til the time of Julian came in—
The fourth thou ever had'st been reckon'd.

Once, sacred to the feast of Venus,
And giddy games of Cybele—
Mother of gods—in old Pessinus
Enthroned, with *Leo* on her knee.

Thy twenty-first, when Rome, old mother,
Did celebrate her natal-day,
And home, her valiant heroes gathered
And gave her vintage-blood away.

But whence the custom of thy first day,
Which, as of old, thy advent rules?
When, even, boyhood of the worst, may
Make of old men, April fools!

But all this only tires and wearies,
As does a nightmare in a dream
So let me turn from all such queries
Unto a more poetic theme.

*Sunday, April 11, 1886.

O, *omnia aperit*—famous—
How grand and wonderful the thought!
But wilt thou, Nature's opener, name us
The opening flower which thou hast brought.

Is it the cow's-lip, or the daisy—
The crocus or the butter-cup?
If so, why hast, with snow, like crazy,
Thy floral beauties covered up?

Yet, we will trust thee, as aforetime,
Since to such pranks thou, long, hast schooled us,
And it is not the first or worst time,
With snow-flowers thou hast April-fool'd us.

Beneath great obligations lay us—
More, if thou wilt, than we can pay—
But ne'er, again, O, April! pay us,
In snowflakes,—and on Sabbath-day!

One short year hence, who'll be observant
Of wind or weather,—who can tell?
One thing is sure, *thy* god's but servant
To *ours*, who ruleth all things well.

RESURRECTION MORN.

O, Easter morn, so bright and glorious,
All hail, thou ever blessed day!
Earnest of life o'er death victorious—
Freed from its prison-house of clay.

Long dormant and ensepulchred,
All nature lay through wintry days,
But now, in tuneful voices heard,
From earth to heaven in living praise.

In myriad forms behold her rising,
On wings, triumphant, from the tomb,
Miraculously vitalizing
The downy leaf and velvet bloom.

The risen Life pervades all nature—
Thrills in the song of singing bird,
Throbs in the blood of every creature,
From insect up to mammoth herd.

It swells the bud and paints the flower,
Arrays old Earth in garments new;
Adoréd be the Almighty Power,
Such lavish wonders deigns to do!

The glorious change, so gay and vernal,
That fills the soul with sweet surprise,
Points mortal life to life eternal—
Away from earth, beyond the skies!

Could I the leaves or blossoms number,
Or count old ocean's hoarded sands,
Still, lost in gratitude, I'd wonder
O'er countless blessings of Thy hands.

O grave, where is thy victory, now?
O death, where is thy cruel sting?
Life's crown adorns the thorn-pierced brow
Of the arisen Lord and King.

Let Nature's hosts, so late imprisoned
In their deep slumbers, dark and long,
Now, in their glorious garments, risen,
Join in the resurrection song!

APPENDIX.

NOTES.

Note **1,** Page 27. The London whip was a celebrated raw-hide wagon-whip manufactured on (what was then considered) a large scale originally, and, perhaps only at London, a small village or post-town situated at the foot of the North Mountain, in Franklin county, and on the great line of turnpike roads leading from Philadelphia to Pittsburg. The Loudon whip was the regulation whip of the Regulars: and if a farmer or "militia" teamster flourished one, he was considered "tony."

2, Page 29. In earlier times, when the speckled front abounded in our brooks and rivulets, schools of them were not uncommon in the clear and sparkling springs 'neath the branches of the willows, or the grand old sycamores at the farmer's spring-house. Such was the case at my own native homestead; and well do I remember the family tradition, that a trout had been taken from the spring and allowed to breathe *three times* into the mouth of my older brother, while yet an infant, (in accordance with the then, popular belief that thereby, if done in faith, the child would be prevented from taking whooping-cough;) but that in my own case, the wise precaution had been neglected. I only know that I had whooping-cough, and that, very severely, whilst my brother, though occupying the same bed with me, during the time, never took it. I have no knowledge or information as to the origin of this superstition, and have met with but few persons who seemed to have heard of it; yet the fact of its prevalence, especially among persons of German descent, is beyond question.

3, Page 29. It was a common, and rather vulgar practice, to persuade one afflicted with mumps, to enter a pig-sty and rub the swollen neck back and forth, a certain—but of course, an *odd*—number of times, on the front edge of the hog-trough, which was necessarily, worn smooth by necks of the feeding swine. The custom, or, practice, should perhaps, be classed, rather, with the popular *tricks* than superstitions of the time. The application of a clean, but sore, neck, to a filthy pig-trough, was among the safe remedies, if not the infallible cures.

4, (wrongly numbered) Page 28. The persistent crying of an infant,—always more alarming and annoying to the nurse than the colicky cause of it was dangerous to the child,—was, often, superstitiously attributed to the diabolical influence of—witchcraft; and for which the power of the Holy One was supposed to be the only sovereign remedy; hence, probably, the superstitious practice of placing an open Bible under the pillow of the tormented and restless child. However erroneous faith in such a cure might be, the idea was a beautiful one and the practice surely not demoralizing.

5, Page 38. That particularly favored disciple of St. Crispin, (as also the tailor and the pedagogue) made his annual round—"whipping the cat"—from house to house among the farmers, usually about butchering-time, was, almost invariably provided with a "pullican," the only dental instrument, except a punch, then in use. By means of these he managed to *pull* or *punch* out all aching teeth or decaying stumps, and not unfrequently small portions of the jaw-bone; but always to the great relief of the *sufferer*, for a tooth thus extracted would never ache again, though the jaw might. This K. of St. C. M. D. D. D. S., also carried a lance and cured all other ills by bleeding the patient, (if old enough.) The blacksmith or the tailor frequently rendered similar "professional" services.

6, Page 39. The abominable practice, sanctioned,—as it was by the family doctor—of dosing children suffering from incipient measles, with a vile decoction of sheep-dung as a developing stimulant, was also common, especially among people of German descent. But that such, and even worse things were practised among those of other nationalities is equally true, for I knew a Scotch Irishman (named Brooks) to administer three live lice to his child, to cure the disease known among Germans as "*das Abnehme*;" (Abnahme, decay, or decline in flesh.) Brooks told me one dose was "curing the child." I congratulated the child, rather than the stupid father that a repetition of the horrible dose seemed unnecessary.

7, Page 39. This was a common and infallible cure for wind-colic, or gripes, in a child; but it was essentially necessary that the horse-collar should be taken *warm* from the neck of the horse. If a child was "liver-grown," it was treated, if small enough, in the same way; or, it was thumb-greased and pow-wowed by a "doctor-woman."

8, Page 58. General James Burns, (familiarly know as "Jimmy" Burns) was the son of John Bourns of revolutionary fame, who was a black-smith, residing three miles east of Waynesboro, Franklin County; and here, as the legend runs, in 1775, in his little rural smithy, assisted by several other brawny patriots, this son of Vulcan (the elder Bourns) and his fellow "rebels," by means of almost Herculean labors, forged and finished one of the very first of American Cannon. It went into the army and was captured by the British at the battle of Brandy-wine. (*Historical Sketch of Franklin Co., P. 239.*) The Bourns were among Franklin County's most estimable citizens; and the General held several honorable and important public trusts—among them, that of High Sheriff of the county, to which he was elected in Oct. 1835, while living a neighbor to our family; and I still remember

that the first "hurrah!" I ever joined in over the result of an election was that of General Burns.

9, Page 60. "Van Amburg" was a very large farm-horse upholstered with hay, straw, and a dingy old wagon-cover, in the style of an elephant, and a more downright terror to the "uninitiated" country-horse could not well be imagined.

10, Page 60.

"The giant riding on the jack
Was General Alexander."

The giant, was, really, a very tall and gaunt man named John C. Fry, then quite a noted character and familiar figure in and about Waynesboro, the scene of all these memorable events, of which, as I bore a part in them, I can speak "by the book." Fry, in this parade, was mounted on a small but very venerable donkey, descended in a direct line from Baalam's, and wore, among other old-time military trappings, a *chapeaubras*, similar to that worn by General Sam. Alexander, commander in chief of the battalion; and hence, Fry was dubbed "General Alexander."

11, Page 140. At the husking, (as at the butter-boiling and other rural gatherings, the young folk—male and female—were paired) each had his, or her "partner;" and by custom, the finding of the red ear entitled the lucky finder to a kiss from his fair one; though by custom, as well, it was ever the result of easy conquest at the end of a short, and faintly contested "sham-battle," often while the light was extinguished.

12, Page 141. Hunted the fox with tail on fire. *Ceres*, the Roman goddess of corn, seed, &c., held two annual festivals, one in April and the other in October, in honor, respectively, of the revival and decay of vegetable life. One of these, the first it is said, included the hunting of a fox with a torch tied to his tail. Though one would rather suppose this to have occured in October than in April; and accordingly, I have availed myself of the poet's license by so assuming it. The legend naturally reminds us of that of Samson and the Philistines, though there does not seem to have been any correspondence between them.

13, Page 141. *Demeter* the *Greek* goddess of seed and harvest. In very early times, the worship of Demeter was introduced into Rome and was conducted in connection with that of *Ceres*. Demeter was the mother of Persephone, who, while alone gathering flowers, was carried off by Pluto, the god of the lower world, where she was kept in durance vile; her mother, meantime, seeking for her in vain, in her distress, refusing all meat and drink, and threatening a famine, Zeus, the father of Persephone, agreed to allow her to live one half the year with her mother on the earth, but the other half below with Pluto. In this we see the beautiful allegory of Summer and Winter, the succession of vegetable life and death, and also, though dimly, traces of the christian doctrine of the resurrection. (See the account of the Eleusinian temple worship, Am. Reprint Enc. Brit., titles *Ceres*, *Eleusinia*.)

14, Page 155. On Halloween-night, according to Scotch folk-lore, witches, devils, and all other mischief-making beings were abroad on their baleful mid-night errands; particularly those ærial people, the Fairies, were said to have held a grand anniversary. (*See* Burns; Allan Cunningham's Edition, Boston, 1853.) Why this should be the case on so holy an occasion (as All Saints,) seems in itself, a mystery. In our own olden times, as many still, remember the diabolical tricks described in the text, besides many others, were, perhaps, only too common. Were they perpetrated half so frequently *now*, our Quarter Sessions would be occupied in the trial of many *more* cases of "malicious mischief." Then, no one thought of prosecuting "the boys" for so trivial an offense as a nocturnal knocking in of a neighbor's door with cabbages, hiding away his horse in the woods, or putting his wagon on the barn.

15, Page 156. They went, hand-in-hand, with eyes closed (or bandaged) among the "kail" and pulled the first they met; its being straight or crooked, big or little, was prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the future husband or wife.

16, Page 156. If any "yird," (earth) adhered to the roots, it was "tocher," (luck, or good fortune,) and the taste of the "custoc," or heart, indicated the temper, or disposition of the prospective husband or wife. Finally, the "runts" were laid above the house-door, and the christian names of the people who first chanced to enter, were according to priority of placing the runts, the names in question. This reminds us of our own old-time charm of the "merrythought."

17, Page 156. Burning the "nits" (nuts) was also, a famous charm among the Scotch. They named the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they laid it in the fire, and ascending as they burned quietly together, or started *from* each other, the course and issue of the court-ship would be. And this was so like what, in our own youthful times we did on many a happy autumn or winter evening, with apple-seeds on the heated fire-shovel, when around the old-time kitchen-hearth, that we cannot doubt the Caledonian origin of the custom. Burns sings sweetly:

"The auld guid wife's weel hoarded nits
Are round an' round divided,
An monie lads' and lasses' fates
Are there that night decided;" &c.

18, Page 156. "Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and darkling, throw into the pot a clue of blue yarn; wind it on a clue off the old one; and toward the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand 'wha hauds?' (who holds?), an answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, giving the Christian and sur-names of your future spouse."

19, Page 156. One went out, stealthily, to the barn-floor at night, opening both doors wide, and taking the "wecht," or winnowing machine, went three times through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind; the third time, an apparition passed through the barn—in at the windy door and out at the other—having the form and figure of the object in queston, and the appearance, or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.

20, Page 156. "Take a lighted candle and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, combing your hair all the time, and the face of your conjugal companion-to-be, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder."

21, Page 156. Another was the hemp-seed charm. A youth of either sex went out, *secretly* and in the darkness of the night, sowed a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it

with a bushy limb, or vine, drawn after, and repeating, now and then, "Hemp-seed, I saw thee ! Hemp-seed, I saw thee ! and he, (or she) who is to be my true love, come after me and pou' thee." Then, looking over the left shoulder, he (or she) would see the person so invoked in the attitude of pulling hemp.

Another was the bean-stack charm. Man or maid went, *unnoticed*, to a bean-stack and fathomed it *three* times—'round ; the *last* fathom of the last *time*, he, (or she,) caught, in his (or her) arms, the appearance of his (or her) future bride, (or spouse.)

Another was the sleeve-charm ; a social spell. One or more young persons went out to a small stream, cr rivulet, running southwardly, but to a place where "three lairds' lands met," and there dipped the *left* shirt-sleeve into the water. After which, returning to the house, the wet sleeve was hung before an open fire ; the person using the spell retired to bed, but lay awake, watching it, until about midnight, when an apparition, the exact counterpart of the grand object in question, came and turned the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.

And still another was the dish-charm Three dishes were placed in a row on the hearth, one with clean water, one with foul, and the third empty. A youth of either sex was then blindfolded and led to the hearth, where he or she, dipped the *left* hand into one of the dishes, if a female, and she dipped by chance, into the clean water, she would come to the bar of matrimony a maid ; if in the foul, otherwise ; and if in the empty one, there would be no marriage at all. This was, however, repeated three times, and each time with a re-arrangement of the dishes. (See notes to Cunningham's Edition of Burns' Poems ; "Halloween.")

22, Page 178. Among the many beautiful Asian myths was one according to which sun, moon and stars were all thought to be fixed to the great heavens, because it seemed like a solid arch, *heaved*, or lifted up, over the flat earth. It was believed to be the place of bliss, where care and want and age could never enter ; and the path to it was said to be along that bright-looking band across the sky known as the "milky way." (See Childhood Of The World, P. 55.)

23 & 24, Page 176. The power of divination, or the obtaining knowledge of secret or future things by revelation from oracles or omens, as well as from different parts of animals, such as the spleen and entrails, as claimed by the ancient astrologers and others professing supernatural powers, is well known;and even in our own olden times, many of our rural ancestors entertained modified superstitions that were evidently attributable to the influence of those ancient practices. (See Encyclopedia Britannica, Art. Divination.)

25, Page 178. The term metzelsoup is the Anglicised form of the German, Metzelsuppe. Metzeln, means to kill and cut to pieces, animals for meat—preeminently, for sausage. In the olden time, a time-honored custom, (doubtless brought by our German ancestors from the fatherland,) prevailed, of sending to each near neighbor, at butchering time, a taste of the delicious sausage and puddings which were made in such great abundance on butchering occasions, which occured, as they still do among our country-folk, at least twice during each winter ; this "taste" usually consisted of a good sized dish—holding eight or ten pounds —heaping full, and was regarded as the pledge of continuing friendship between the families immediately concerned ; for, if the metzelsoup was either omitted or not reciprocated, there was, surely something wrong ; and the preacher in charge, who always took a deep interest in keeping up the good custom, was sure to hear of the matter ; and he generally succeeded in effecting a reconciliation over a love feast of fat things. This metzelsoup-custom become general among our rural folk of *all* nationalities, but is now gradually falling into desuetude together with many others.

26, Page 180. "The art of separating alcoholic spirits from fermented liquors appears to have been known in the far East from the most remote antiquity." (Enc. Brit., Art. Distillation.)

27, Page 182. "The art is supposed to have been first known to and practised by the Chinese, whence a knowledge of it gradually traveled eastward. A rude kind of still, which is yet employed, has been used for obtaining ardent spirits in Ceylon from time immemorial." *Ibid.*

28, Page 182. "Albucasis, who lived in the 12th century, is spoken of as the first Western philosopher who taught the art of distillation as applied to the preparation of spirits." *Ibid.*

29, Page 182. "At the time when Henry II.—in the 12th century—invaded and conquered Ireland, the inhabitants were in the habit of making and using an alcoholic liquor —(*uisgebeatha*, water of life) a term since abbreviated into whiskey, which, consequently, is synonymous with the classical *aqua vitae*." *Ibid.*

30 & 31, Page 183. The art of brewing was known and practiced by the Egyptians many hundred years before the Christian era, and afterwards by the Greeks, Romans, and ancient Gauls from whom it has been handed down to us. All countries, whether civilized or savage, have in every age, prepared an intoxicating drink of some kind. *Id.* Art. Brewing.

Barleybree : Blood of barley ; malt liquor.

> John Barleycorn was a hero bold
> Of noble enterprise,
> For if you do but taste his blood,
> 'Twill make your courage rise.
> —*Burns.*

32, Page 183. Baverstock, in 1768, procured one of Richardson's Saccharometers, and received from Thrale, the celebrated brewer in Southwark, who had tested it, a certificate of its value ; and in 1785, Baverstock published his *Hydrometrical Observations and Experiments in the Breweries*. But to Mr. Richardson belongs the merit of first bringing his Improved Hydrometer, (which he called Saccharometer) to the notice of the trade. By this instrument the brewer is enabled to ascertain the amount of saccharine, or fermentable matter in the wort, and thus take advantage of a particularly good sample of malt. *Ibid.*

33, Page 182. Bass' celebrated ale. Bass was the most extensive brewer in the world, and paid license, annually, on 1 000 000 barrels. Eighteen other English brewers paid license on 200 000 barrels. *Ibid*, P.

34, Page 183. *Burton-upon-Trent.* The special adaption of the waters of Burton-on-Trent for brewing purposes was known as early as the 13th century ; and the precious secret was first discovered by certain monks, who held lands adjacent. Mary

Queen of Scots, when a prisoner in Tutbury Castle, was furnished with the celebrated beer brewed near by, at Burton-on-Trent. *Ibid*, 237.

35, Page 184. Barn-raisings were great frolics in the olden time. A farmer who was about to erect a log, or frame barn, having all his material ready on the ground, would invite his sturdy neighbors to the raising, and they generally accepted the invitation, to a man, and not only the men, but the women, and the young folk, male and female, would gather to have a good time. On such occasions, great, and sometimes Herculean feats of strength, in lifting heavy timbers were displayed by the men, among whom rivalry prevailed; and sometimes bets of nominal value were made as to who should prove the stronger. Meantime the women prepared the feast of innumerable good things to satisfy the hunger and the sharpened appetites of these modern giants of strength, and oh! such appetites! it would have done the average eater of the present time good to *see* these people eat. On all such occasions, raisings, log-rollings, (not political) huskings, harvestings, and the like, whiskey and other strong drinks were supplied in abundance and freely used, yet, in comparative moderation. Disputes, quarrels, and fights occurred once in a while, but a fight was a fight, usually fought out on the spot; and nobody ever thought of an appeal to the *law* for a redress of the trifling grievance of a blacken'd eye or a bloody nose. It was "trial by battle," pure and simple; and a prosecution for assault and battery under such circumstances, and especially if at the instance of the party most in fault, as is now frequently the case, would, in those days, have been justly regarded as an act of the basest cowardice. But generally, these rural frolics passed off most peacefully and joyously; the hard day's work always ending with a sumptuous supper, followed, not unfrequently, by a merry dance.

36, Page 187. "*Regulars*" and "*Militia*": These military terms were applied as *sobriquets* to the two classes of wagoners; to those who followed the business regularly and extensively, the term "Reg'lars" was applied in the spirit of respect and compliment. To the farmers, or common country teamsters who drove Conestogas, and whose trips were short, few, and occasional, the term "Militia", was applied derisively *by* the Regulars. A prosperous and successful, or rather *lucky*, regular (such as "old 'Tine Elliot of Franklin Co.,) was usually, the owner of several teams, one, the principal, and finest of which he drove, himself, in the van of the procession, his hired drivers bringing up the rear. The difference between these two classes of teams and teamsters was very apparent. A "Reg'lar" never drove less than five horses; generally six, and in case of emergency, seven. His harness, (or gears) were not so heavy and clumsy, as those of the "Militia." Every horse had his housing, of deer-skin or other suitable material trimmed with heavy red fringe; and the bridle head-stall with bunches of bright colored ribbon. Bell-teams were comparatively common; each horse, except the saddle-horse, being furnished with a full set, trimmed with ribbons of various bright colors. The horses were placed in military order, "rank and size;" the heavier pair nearest the wheels; the next in size at the end of the tongue, and the lightest and gayest at the lead, or end of the (fifth) chain.

The wagons used by the "Reg'lars" were heavy, high-wheeled, broad-tread, furnished with the patent-locking machine, or brake, so many improved varieties of which are now in use. (The original patentee of which was John W. Davidson, of Brownsville, Fayette Co. Pa., Dec. 31, 1828.) The bed, or body of the wagon was long, rather deep, and somewhat galley-shaped; painted a deep-blue, and furnished with sideboards of a bright red color. The "Reg'lar" carried neither feed nor "grub," but depended on the jolly host of the old-time inn for both. He took great pride in his team, and much rivalry and jealousy prevailed among them as to the strength and beauty of their horses and the loads they could haul. Many beautiful teams there were. Sometimes a whole team of one color—iron, or dapple grays, blacks or bays of fine blood and groom. Even the noble horses themselves seemed, at times, to manifest a certain instinctive consciousness of the pride taken in them by their owner or driver, and when he, proudly enthroned in the saddle, drew the long rein on his prancing leader, flourished his famous Loudon whip, making the sharp snapping silk tingle in their ears, the faithful wagon-dog, the while, leaping, and yelping encouragement in advance, every horse sprang into the harness, stretching every trace to its utmost capacity, and moving the ponderous load steadily forward with an ease and grace that was simply grand and beautiful, when the train consistsd, as it often did, of as many as a dozen teams, all thus moving onward in steady procession.

The wagon-beds or bodies, were arched with six or eight stately bows, the middle or lowest being midway between the ends, and the rest rising gradually on either side to front and rear, so that the end ones were nearly of equal hight; and over all these was stretched the great strong hempen cover, well corded down at the sides and ends. In the red sideboards, white covers, and blue beds, were proudly shown the tricolor of the National Ensign. Not unfrequently the loads were up to the bows, and as many as 60 to 80 hundred pounds, or 3 to 4 tons were hauled at a load. By the annual report of president Roberts to the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, just published, the total amount of tonnage carried in 1887 was over 106 000 000. On the main line and branches east of Pittsburg the through and local freight was over 30 000 000 tons. At an average of 3½ tons, this would make 8 571 425 old-time wagon-loads; and allowing six trips, or twelve loads a year to a team, the number of such teams required to be continually going to carry this (30 000 000 tons of) freight would be 714 285: and allowing 60 feet space for each team, would make a caravan nearly 8 000 miles in length, and comprising at least 714 285 men and 3 511-000 horses; add to all these the increased amount of travel even by the stage-coach alone, and then imagine the scene! Even so early as 1836 there were four daily lines of stages running between Philadelphia and Pittsburg, yet, (as we learn from the *Ledger* of March 25th, of that year) there was so much travel between the two places that the names of passengers had to be booked from one to two weeks in advance to secure seats. But *now*, instead of four lines of stages, there are over two hundred arrivals and departures daily of immense trains of cars, many of them filled with passengers, at Broad Street Station; each train drawn by a single horse, under whose ponderous iron hoof the earth trembles, and whose shrill neighings rend the welkin and echo and re-echo among the hills, the mountains and the vallies of the land of Penn.

On the lines east of Pittsburg and Erie, alone, 54 733 927 passengers were carried in 1887; having no certain knowledge as to the number of stages that constituted a line, I can but guess at how many it would have required to carry 54 000 000 of passengers annually. Allowing, however, that a single coach made 30 trips a year, it would require 90 000 old-time coaches to do the work. Allowing one driver and four horses to each coach it would require as many drivers as coaches and 360 000 horses. Imagine either this state of things from day to day, or the many millions of people that were carried by rail to and from the National Centennial in a period of a six-months making their trips to and from it the old-time way, and maintain our gravity if we can.

Even as it was half a century ago, the "immense" amount of wagon-hauling, stage, and other travel, driving, etc., on the then great turnpike roads, required and supported an equally immense system of inns or taverns, stores and shops along the routes, creating, altogether, an unbroken scene of animation, rude gaiety and prosperity, but with which the existing state of things along these once great thoroughfares is in sad and silent contrast: take, e. g. the section between Chambersburg and Pittsburg: St. Thomas, Loudon, McConnellsburg, Bloody Run, The Crossings, Bedford, Rays'-town, Stuckey's, (or the forks) Stoystown, Somerset, Greensburg, Ligonier, and other places that used to be full of life, stir, and bustle; these gradually fell into comparative dullness, dilapidation and decay, as the great lines of railway and canals approached completion, grass and weeds grew in the turnpike ruts, and the merry old-time taverns became the dullest and gloomiest places in the land. In the great stone chimneys, and the spacious hearths around which many a tale was told, song was sung, fiddle and dance were heard, echoed only the lonely chirp of the cricket. Between the towns and villages named were many wagon-taverns, where tables were set that would do honor to any age or country; the names of some of these I recall; Winter's, Bratton's, Brindle's, Vondersmith's, Scott's, (in Loudon) Shaeffer's, Mrs. Fasenacht's, Mrs. Gilchrist's, Stuck's, Stuckey's, Chenowith's Stattler's, Hutchman's, and so on. There was one somewhere in the *Glades*, on the Allegheny Mountains, (the region of the only *perfect* butter ever made) the name of which I have forgotten; but from the circumstance that the proprietor had some half dozen light-haired daughters, it was known among the jolly wagoners as "the flax patch."

All wagoners, "Reg'lars," and "Militia," carried their beds with them. These consisted of rough mattresses, coarse blankets, coverlets or robes, but no pillows. At bed-time they were unrolled, and spread, side by side upon the Bar-room floor; and if the occupant appreciated the luxury of a pillow, he readily found it on the back of an inverted chair placed under the head of his bed. Now, imagine him of the "Militia;" the driver of the team of four, seeking repose on his home-spun, hastily improvised, but far more clean and comfortable bed, among half a dozen or more of the "Reg'lars!" But the scene must be left to the imagination of those who are fortunate enough to enjoy the pleasures of memory. All that has been said of wagoning, driving and traveling on the various turnpikes between Chambersburg and Pittsburg is true of that part of the great National Turnpike between Cumberland and Wheeling. Mr. Day, in his *Pennsylvania Historical Collections* remarks: "The travel and wagon transportation on the National Road gives great life and bustle to Uniontown. Scarcely an hour passes when a stage-coach may not be seen passing through the town. The property invested in these passenger lines is immense. Some idea may be formed of its importance that one proprietor, during the recent suspension of specie payments, is said to have kept in circulation and in good credit about $500 000 worth of *shinplasters* along the line of the road." I have a pleasant memory of passing through Uniontown by stage, about the time of which Mr. Day wrote. The grand old tally-ho was crowded with passengers, and the moment it stopped in front of the hotel, it was besieged by a swarm of juvenile venders of maple-sugar. The competiton was ferocious. Each boy's sugar was the best and cheapest; but so far as I could judge, it was all one price and all one quality—all equally good and all equally cheap. Uniontown is in the midst of the maple-sugar camps.

One important feature of the times remains to be noticed,—the great tide of foreign German immigration westward. Thousands and tens of thousands of families annually passed through from the eastern Cities to Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois; the latter being then regarded as "the far West." In many instances one or more of these families were provided with a wagon which they brought with them from the *Vaterland*, and in which they transported their meagre household, bed, and other clothing and such members of their families as were unable to travel on foot. These wagons were small and light, constructed almost exclusively of wood, without paint, and drawn by one or two horses. An ordinary muslin cover stretched over a few rude bows afforded a slight protection from sun, wind, and rain to those who were huddled together under it. The rest trudged alongside through dust or mud; many of them begging their way, whilst hundreds and thousands of *Thalers* were snugly stowed away in the little *Kaffern* (chests) on the wagons, or concealed on their persons. The great mass of them, however, took through-passage, at least to Pittsburg, or Wheeling, on the great road-wagons of the "Reg'lars;" sometimes to the exclusion of other loading, but frequently "topped out" the usual freight with bedding, women, and children, while those who were able, trudged alongside or behind. And what a grotesque group of humanity was a wagon-load of German immigrants! The males in their short blue coats and pants, profusely trimmed with legendary gilt buttons; their clumsy, heavy-nailed boots and shoes, their little, flat, blue cloth caps, and their enormous, long-stemmed gracefully curved pipes, always in their mouths and nearly always in blast. The females in their short gowns, long, heavily-ribbed stockings, or (if in summer) bare limbs, heavy wooden shoes, and their borderless but neatly quilted little caps; these with their children of various ages and sizes, sitting or rather hanging, with their lower limbs greatly exposed out over the sides of the wagons, to say nothing of the unmentionable scenes which sudden emergencies or pressing necessities frequently occasioned while the caravan was halting to rest and water in a town, a village or at an intermediate tavern. Yet, many of these German immigrants and hundreds of thousands of their descendants are now among the worthiest and wealthiest citizens of our great and growing West.

It was in the mountainous parts of the state, e. g. between the Cumberland Valley and Greensburg which is traversed by five

distinct mountain ranges, viz: the Tuscaroras, Ray's Hill, Alleghenies, Laurel Hills and Chestnut Ridge, where a long train of these wagons appeared, either from mountain-height or distant vale, most picturesque and beautiful.

It used to be a common saying, though not strictly true, that taverns on these turnpikes were only "a stone's-throw apart." Certain it is, however, they were, in many localities within sight from each other, not including those in villages, few of which had less than two or three. A reference to the variety and peculiarty of their *signs* may amuse the younger, or refresh the older reader. Many of these signs were quite handsomely painted on disks, or fields, in size about four by five, or six feet, suspended in frames, mounted on stout sign-posts, from twenty to twenty five feet high. From the lower end of the main board, was suspended the (movable) "tail-board," bearing, usually in glaring gilt letters, the landlord's name. Occasionally there were to be seen the superadded words, "Stage Office," "Pasture For Droves," or "Stabling for, (100 or 150) Horses." Each landlord or proprietor had the disk or field of his sign embellished with a painted bust of his favorite hero. Among these, WASHINGTON, of course was chief, but LAFAYETTE, LEE, GATES, WAYNE and other revolutionary generals, and HANCOCK, ADAMS, JEFFERSON, MADISON, MONROE, FRANKLIN, and other great statesmen, were, in this way, *common* enough. The war of 1812 had however, brought to the front a new batch of celebrities worthy of all honor; chiefly among whom was JACKSON, who was almost deified, especially by the democrats during, and after his great success as a statesman. Nevertheless, the bold and commanding figures of SCOTT, HARRISON, MCDONOUGH, and PERRY graced many an old-time tavern-sign as it swayed and screeched in the wintry blasts that swept the hills, the mountains and the vallies of our grand old state. On not a few, signs as also on the sides of the great old tenplate stoves of the period, were to be seen the gallant ship Lawrence, encircled with the undying words of her brave commander, "*Don't give up the ship!*" Besides all these there were the sign of the Bear, the Bull's Head, the Eagle, the Swan, the Rising Sun, the Globe, the Blue Ball, the Barley-Sheaf, Cross-Keys, Plough, &c., a few of which still remain, to remind us of the days that were.

37, Page 198. Of course, this had no reference to that portion of the "hunters of Kentucky" who so "ingloriously fled" on the advance of the British upon the works of Gen. Morgan. (See Jackson's Report of the battle of New Oreleans. Hinton's History of the U. S. Vol. 1, p. 685.)

38, Page 207. The Isle of Delos, struck by Neptune with his trident from the bed of the Ægean sea. It drifted about until Jupiter moored it as a refuge for his persecuted Leto, (Letona) who after a labor of nine days and nine nights brought forth Apollo, the Sun-God, and afterwards Diana, the Moon Goddess. Among the various powers and functions which the superstition of the ancients ascribed to Apollo, were those of God of music, and president and protector of the Muses.

Reynolds, in describing his visit to Francis Glass, while teaching a district school in a western log cabin, quotes the latter as addressing his young visitor and future disciple thus: "Welcome to the shrine of the Muses, my young friend. The Temple of the Delphian God was originally a laurel hut, and the Muses deign to dwell, accordingly, even in my rustic abode," And gives so graphic a picture of the old-time schoolhouse and the pedagogue, that I here quote from it, perhaps rather freely, without apology.

"I found him in a remote part of the country" (Warren Co., O.) "in a good neighborhood of thrifty farmers, who had employed him to instruct their children, who, in general were then acquiring the simplest rudiments of an English education. The school-house now rises fresh in my memory. It stood on the banks of a small stream in a thick grove of native oaks, resembling more a den of Druidical rites, than a temple of learning."

"The building was a low log cabin, with a clap-board roof, but indifferently tight—All the light of heaven found in this cabin, came through apertures made on each side in the logs, and these were covered with oiled paper to keep out the cold air, while they admitted the dim rays,"

"The seats, or benches, were of hewn timbers, resting on upright posts, placed in the ground to keep them from being overturned by the mischievous urchins who sat on them. In the centre was a large stove, between which and the back part of the building, stood a small desk, without lock or key, made of rough plank; and, behind this desk, sat Professor Glass when I entered his school."

"There might have been forty scholars present; twenty-five of these were engaged in spelling, reading, and writing, a few in arithmetic, a small class in English Grammar; and a half a dozen like myself, had joined his school for the benefit of his instruction in the Greek and Latin languages, preparatory to a more extended course in one of the Ohio seminaries."

"The moment he learned that my intention was to pursue the study of the Languages with him, his whole soul appeared to beam from his countenance. He commenced in a strain, which in another would have seemed pedantic, but which, in fact, was far from being so in him."

"The following imperfect sketch is drawn entirely from memory; "Welcome to the shrine of the Muses, my young friend. The Temple of the Delphian God was originally, a laurel hut, and the Muses deign to dwell, accordingly, even in my rustic abode. Here, too, the winds hold converse; 'Eurus, and Caurus, and Argestes loud'; and the goddesses of the Castalian fountain, the daughters of the golden-haired Mnemosyne, are sometimes silent with the lyre, that they may catch the sweet murmurs of the harp of Eolus. Here, too, I, the priest of the Muses, sing to the young of either sex, strains before unheard. Plutus, indeed, that blind old deity, is far away; and far away let him be, for well has the Prince of comic poets styled him a filthy, crooked, miserable, wrinkled, bald, and toothless creature'" (*Washingtonii Vita*, by Francis Glass, edited by J. N. Reynolds, third edition, 1836, Pref. pp. ii, iii, iv.)

39, Page 212. The custom of shoemaker and tailor to go from house to house, making new, and mending up old shoes and clothes, from materials furnished by their employers, was called "Whipping the Cat." They were, usually, tolerably lazy fellows, fond of their pipes, their cider and all manner of good fare. They were, moreover, greatly given to story-telling, discussions and disputations, and often protracted their stay more according to the quality of the fare and the general treatment they received than the amount of work they found to do. Nevertheless, their coming was always

looked for, particularly among the young folk, with joyous anticipations, and their departure with feelings of loneliness and regret. Occasionally the itinerant schoolmaster who "boarded round," would happen to make a visit while the knight of the goose and shears, and he of the awl and the last were on hand; and it was then, when this immortal trio became merry or contentious over their cider or their sangaree, that things became lively, and great questions of morals, of church or of state were mooted and settled.

40, Page 212. That oxen talked on Christmas night was a popular belief; but the origin of this bit of curious folk-lore I have been unable to ascertain. Though there seems reason for supposing that it is of German origin and in some way evolved from the scriptural account of the Savior's birth in a manger, or stable, ("because there was no room in the inn.")

41 & 42, Page 227. It was the common practice for the larger "scholars" to assemble and get possession of the school-house in advance of the "master's" arrival, very early on the morning of the day preceding Christmas, and "bar" him out and keep him out until he subscribed his name to a paper something like the following, (which I give from memory founded on my own observation, having, like many others of my age, more than once participated in the popular and exciting game of barring out the master:)

"Three dozen Ginger-Cakes; Six dozen Sugar-Cakes; Six dozen Molasses-Crackers; Four dozen Ginger-horses; do. Ginger-Rabbits; Six dozen Mintsticks; Three dozen Belly-guts; one hundred Loveletters; 2 Galls of Beer; one half bushel of some kind of Nuts, and one weeks Holidays."

But this he did only in the last resort—after having fruitlessly exhausted all ordinary and sometimes, even some very extraordinary means for effecting an entrance. So popular was the custom at one time that many, even of the parents, guardians, and others in *loco parentis*, aided and abetted the pupils in the contest by furnishing them provisions, and thus enabling them to "hold the fort" for several days; and seldom, indeed, if ever, did the "master even so much as attempt to inflict punishment upon those, who, it was deemed had neither done nor demanded aught but what was their legal right; that is, by immemorial custom; for whence the custom, no man knoweth any more than he does of the sepulchre of Moses.

43, Page 222. She had faith in odd numbers—believed there was luck even in *giving* seven instead of six. She was a good, kind, motherly old soul, and many a God's blessing did she invoke (I trust not in vain,) on her youthful, rustic patrons as one of her wrinkled, shriveled, and long bony hands received the pennies and the other gently patted their heads. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

44, Page 223. The practice of singing hymns with the school-children was confined almost entirely to teachers of German descent.

45, Page 229, John Rogers' Primer was my first book at school, in the very same old log school house which, long after, was immortalized by Doctor Harbaugh in his justly celebrated Pennsylvania German poem, ("'S Alt Schuulhaus An Der Krik.") In the John Roger's Primer there was an illustration of his burning at the stake at Smithfield as first martyr in the persecutions in the reign of Queen Mary, surrounded by his family, consisting of his wife and "nine small children with one at the breast."

46, Page 238. It was but too common an occurence on such occasions, for the rude rustic wags, during the singing, to turn loose or hide away one or more of the saddle horses, as they found them tethered to trees or fences near the schoolhouse where the singing school was assembled. But this also, was only in keeping with the customs of the times, and seldom, or never, resulted in anything serious.

47, Page 240. Besides turning a gallant's horse "adrift" it was usual, first to reverse the saddle and tie the bridle to his tail; and if a horse returned home in such a plight, it was regarded as conclusive proof of the rider's safety, relieving his family and friends of all anxiety concerning it.

48, Page 257.

For as the brook flowed on forever
No power but death the tie should sever.

—(*See Page 134.*)

The ceaseless flow of the brook was suggestive of the constancy, if not of the smoothness, of the course of true love. Hence, probably, the beautiful legend imparting additional sanctity and constancy to troth plighted while crossing a stream. It was not uncommon among youthful lovers in those days to exchange their first marriage promises in this rustic manner. Many a life-long, happy matrimonial alliance was, no doubt, formed in this simple and artless way,—the love stricken swain with his precious burden on his back, in token of the practical fulfilment of his future marital obligations. Nor was it only while crossing on a foot-log or bridge, but even while wading a stream at a low stage and in warm weather.

The words of the mutual pledges were something like the following:

"While this brook flows to the river,
I will cease to love thee, never;
Deep as depths and high as heaven,
Unto you my vow is given."

Burns' allusion is apt and beautiful:

"We twa hae paid'lt i' the burn
Frae mornin' sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld laug syne."

49, Page 280. Stored away in a box in the house of a citizen of West Chester is a collection of ancient samplers that for age and beauty would be hard to match. Many people are proud to possess specimens of needle-work of their grandmother or great-grandmother and prize them very highly when fifty or a hundred years have faded their colors and frayed their edges, but few can show five hundred-year-old ones. The oldest bears the name of Mary Hodge and the year of her birth 1709. It was probably made before she changed her name, which tradition says happened before she was 20, about 1728 then. It measures 16 by 7¾ inches, contains two or three sizes of alphabets, several lines of reading, and a variety of flowers all worked in silk in fancy stitches. Another bears the date 1747, two 1774 and the fifth 1783. There is one worked in 1801 by Ann Gibson, one by Mary Whaler, 1814, and one 1811. Two very fine pieces were made in 1805 by Ann Gibson. One bears the name of "West-town School," besides the maker's name. It contains six patterns of table-cloth stitches, in which the West-

town girls used to be instructed to mend table-cloths neatly, as well as one of the stocking-stitch. The other sampler contains a somewhat lengthy "extract" worked in small black letters on a very fine canvas. —*West Chester Republican.*

50, Page 283. In Rev. Joseph Doddridge's Notes is a graphic description of a Pennsylvania country wedding in primitive times, from which, it will be readily seen, some of the less rude customs of our own time were derived. It is, however, too extended to be fully quoted here. After describing the dance, the custom of obstructing the way by means of grape-vines, ropes, or chains, and of playing tricks on the bridal party, he says: "About nine or ten o'clock, a deputation of the young ladies stole off the bride and put her to bed. * * This done, a deputation of young men, in like manner, stole off the groom and placed him snugly by the side of his bride. The dance still continued and * * in the midst of the hilarity the bride and groom were not forgotten. Pretty late in the night, some one would remind the company that the new couple must stand in need of some refreshment. 'Black Betty,' which was the name of the bottle, was called for and sent up. But sometimes 'Black Betty' did not go alone. I have many times seen as much bread, beef, pork and cabbage sent along with her as would afford a good meal for half a dozen hungry men. The young couple were compelled to eat and drink, more or less, of whatever was offered them. * * On returning to the infair, the order of procession and the race for 'Black Betty' was the same as before. The feasting and dancing often lasted for several days, at the end of which the whole company were so much exhausted with loss of sleep that several days were requisite to fit them to return to their ordinary labors."

From all this the inference is irresistible, that the minister remained as late and as long as the rest. That he thought it no harm to do so, nor probably, to even join in the merry dance, or in swigs of the barley-bree from the luscious lips of "Black Betty." Nor do I mean to censure him for it. Such were the rude, but simple manners and customs of the times, to which all were in a greater or less degree, bound to conform; and this has been true of *all* times, and of none *more* so than the present.

It is the habit, however, of many persons of other than German descent, to attribute whatever of ignorance or remaining rudeness there is among our rural population to its large proportion of Pennsylvania Germans; but there is more of ignorance and prejudice than truth in the insinuation. Mr. Doddridge was not of German extraction, nor was he, in the above quotation giving a picture of *Pennsylvania German Life.* He was, most probably, of Scotch descent, and the scene of his narrative, (Washington County, Pa.,) as is well known, "was originally settled by Scotch-Irish from Bedford and York counties, from Kittanny Valley, from Virginia, and directly from Ireland; and although Germans and other races have since come in, the descendants of the original settlers predominate, and their influence prevails in the *manners* and religions and literary institutions of the county." (Penna. Htst. Col.)

For a still more graphic and interesting description of a similar custom, as practiced among the Scotch, the curious reader is referred to the story of "Mary Ogilvie," by Christopher Keelivine, in his *Tales of Scotland:* (Robertson and Atkins; Glasgow, 1824.)

51, Page 286. The intercepting chain:—The trick of obstructting the progress of a bridal procession, or of the groom and his attendants on their way to the bride's home, by means of chains or grape-vines, was so very common among the early settlers as to justify the belief that it, too, was of foreign origin. (See extracts from Doddridge's Notes, Day's Penna. Hist. Col., p. 663.) And certainly the custom continued down to a time within the memory of many persons still living. What its original purpose was, I know not; but in later times it was, besides its own inherent sport for a company of youngsters, a means of "raising the wind" on a small scale; for never was the obstruction removed until "custom's duty" had been paid in the shape of pocket-money to the rustic rogues. And still later, as I well remember witnessing during the presidential campaign of 1844, the trick of obstructing processions was carried, even into politics; a democratic delegation on its way from Waynesboro' to a mass-meeting at Chambersburg, found its passage completely blocked near Quincy, by a *chevaux-de frise* of stumps, logs, rails and stakes, garnished with *poke*-bushes; but no one was in waiting to receive toll or "duty." Beyond the rugged fact of the obstruction, nothing seemed certain, save the *Clay-y* complexion of the authors of the mischief. The abatement of the nuisance delayed the procession at least half an hour, when the band struck up, and it again moved forward to the tune of "Hail to The Chief." The "dastardly old Federal outrage." as it was indignantly stygmatised, furnished cords of "hickory" fuel to the red-hot eloquence of the speakers, at the meeting, against the whigs, their "broken promises," and in favor of the democrats,—"Polk, Dallas, Shunk, and the Tariff of '42!"

52, Page 322. The village here, again, referred to is Loudon, a very ancient and historic place; known in history as "Loudontown," as early as 1756, when it became the site of *Fort* Loudon, built by the Colonial government for the protection of the frontier settlers against the incursions of the Indians. Situated near the foot of the Kittatinny mountain, on the Chambersburg and Bedford turnpike, it was, for half a century, and more especially from the completion of the great line of turnpikes to Pittsburg, (in 1819) enlivened by staging, wagoning, driving, horseback, and pedestrian travel, the building of heavy "Pittwagons," and the manufacture of gears, harness, whips, etc. It is the birth-place of the late Col. Thos. A. Scott, and of Hon. W. S. Stenger, Secty. of the Commonwealth.

53, Page 323. The landlord was the father of Col. Thos. A. Scott, and a model gentlemen of the olden time; and the kind hospitalities of himself and his most excellent family, enjoyed at their hands during a brief illness while traveling with my parents in the days of my childhood, (March 1830) at this old-time inn of the village, I shall never forget.

54, Page 327. So completely infested by snakes of various kinds was the undergrowth in the mountains in those days, notably during the first warm days of spring, that to avoid being bitten by rattle-snakes and copperheads this was a common and necessary precaution—to drive them out, usually with poles, rakes, etc., before going to work, clearing, chopping wood, or peeling bark. And in the mountains of West Virginia I have known it to be done preparatory to picking whortle-berries.

55, Page 343. "The Gitanos of Estramadura call themselves Chai or Chabos and say that their original country was Chal, or Egypt." To Rev. George Borrow, from whose excellent work ("The Zincali and Bible in Spain") I quote, they gave the following account of their dispersion: "Pharaoh, the great King of Egypt, having conquered all other countries, and his chief delight being war, became sad for want of his favorite pastime; so he challenged the Almighty to battle, which being indignantly declined, God resolved upon punishing Pharaoh, and he caused an opening to be made in the side of a great mountain, into which by means of a tornado, he drove Pharaoh and his armies, when the mouth of the awful abyss closed upon them; but that on the night of St. John, their cries and yellings could be heard therein. After which all the kings and nations which had become subject to Egypt, she, being left utterly defenceless, they made war against her and prevailed, and took her people and drove them forth, dispersing them through all the earth. So that now, the Gypsies of Spain so sadly sing:—

"Apilyela gras Chai la panee Lucalee."
(Our steeds, Guadiana, must now drink of thee)

To put this song into the mouth of a Gypsy of any other country *than* Spain, may be considered an unwarranted license for, even, a poet. If so, I can only say, "what I have written I have written."

56, Page 345. Trimming and drugging domestic animals, as is well known, were among the worst tricks of the Gypsy trade; they were performed stealthily and at night chiefly with the purpose of obtaining advantage in bargains, purchases or exchanges. But they, at times, likewise plied the arts of trimming horses and doctoring sick animals for pay.

57, Page 356. La Bar Lachi, the load-stone. In the miraculous power of this stone, the Gitanos have unbounded faith—that he who is in possession of it has nothing to fear from steel or lead, fire or water, nor even death itself; besides, it is said to be in great demand among the Gypsy-hag procuresses for use in their nefarious arts.

58, Page 356. "There is something remarkable in the Gypsy eye (says Mr. Borrow). Its peculiarity consists chiefly in a strange, staring expression, which to be understood must be seen; and in a thin glaze, which steals over it when in repose, and seems to emit phosphoric light. That the Gypsy eye has sometimes a peculiar effect, we learn from the following stanza:

"A Gypsy stripling's glossy eye
Has pierced my bosom's core,
A feat no eye beneath the sky
Could e'er effect before."

But the evil eye of the Ggpsy *hag* was said to be blighting, and its terrible glance, if cast at a child, sometimes even fatal.

59, Page 357. "All the allusions to minstrels in literature from Langland's time to Spenser's, point to them as strolling musicians. Some of them may have sung to the harp verses of their own composing, and some of them may have composed some of the ballads that now charm us with their fresh and simple art; but the profession of the 'minstrel,' properly so called, was much less romantic than Bishop Percy painted it. It was not merely 'the bigots of their own time' that 'called their harmless art a crime;' in a repressive Act passed by Henry IV., they appear with 'westours, rymours, et autres vacabondes' among the turbulent elements of the community."—*Ency. Brit., Vol. XVI*, p. 502.

60, Page 370. The letter was addressed "Waynesboro'" instead of Waynesburg, (Green Co.) Pa., where (of course) there was also, a John Smith, Sr.

61, Page 381. However common the occurrence of roosters crowing before midnight, the saying, if not the belief, that it boded foul weather near at hand, was equally so. Like all similar signs, it was always verified—sooner or later.

62, Page 382. The common faith in the efficacy of common tar to bar the entrance of witches, was about as strong and tenacious as tar itself.

And many a door-sill and key-hole was tarred
Where there ne'er was a witch to be banished or barred.

63, Page 383. The myths and legends about the mermaids are ancient, wild, and wonderful; nearly all nations and people have, or have had, their superstitions and their folk-lore concerning this strange, fish-tailed, apparently human being. "In relation to man, the mermaid is usually of evil issue, if not of evil intent. She has, generally, to be bribed or compelled to utter her prophecy or bestow her gifts, and whether as wife or paramour, she brings disaster in her train." *Ency. Brit.*, Vol. XVI., p. 44. (Also, Baring Gould's *Myths of the Middle Ages.*)

She was a favorite theme to the old poets; See the *Danish Ballads*, (Longfellow's *Poets and Poetry of Europe,*) e. g. Storm's *Ballad of Sinclair:*

"The moon rode high in the blue night-cloud,
And the waves round the bark rippled smoothly;
When the mermaid rose from her watery shroud,
And thus sang the prophetess soothly."

"Return, return, thou Scottish wight!
Or thy light is extinguished in mourning;
If thou goest to Norway, I tell thee right,
No day shall behold thy returning."

Sinclair, who was at the head of a Scottish invasion of Norway, to his sorrow, heeded not the mermaid's prophetic warning, but contemptuously replied:—

"Now loud thou liest, thou sorceress old!
Thy prophecies ever are sore;
If once I catch thee within my hold,
Thou never shalt prophesy more.

64, Page 395. "Alfarata." This name seems to have been first used by the author of the song entitled "The Blue Juniata." It was also used by my esteemed friend, Rev. Cyrus Cort in his beautiful poem entitled A Response To The "Blue Juniata;" and from him I learn that according to Dr. Brinton of the Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia, the name "Alfarata" is a fanciful one, probably coined by the author of the song in imitation of an Iroquois word, but found in neither that nor the Delaware language.

64, (error) Page 416. It is well known that the ancient Gallic Druids held the mistletoe in the highest veneration; that groves of oak were their chosen retreats, and that whatever grew on that tree was thought to

be a gift from heaven, more especially the mistletoe. When thus found it was cut with a golden knife by a priest clad in a white robe, two white bulls being sacrificed on the spot. The name given to it by the Druids signified in their language All Heal, and its virtues were believed to be very great. *Ency. Brit.* Vol. VII., p. 412.

65, Page 417. "But the most remarkable of all the Druidical charms was the augineum or snake's egg. It was said to be produced from the saliva, or frothy sweat of a number of serpents writhing in an entangled mass, and to be tossed up in the air as soon as formed. The fortunate Druid who managed, as it fell, to catch it in his sagum, or cloak, rode off at full speed on a horse that had been in waiting for him, pursued by the serpents till they were stopped by the intervention of a running stream. A genuine specimen of this egg, when thrown into the water would float against the current, even if encased in gold." *Ibid.*

66, Page 417. Hesus; the name of the chief Deities worshipped by the Druids; it originally appears to have been Hu, a leader of the Cymbric branch of the Gauls, who, after his death was deified by the name of Hesus. *Id.* p. 413.

67, Page 417. I have read somewhere, (I think in Day's Pennsylvania Historical Collections) an account given, probably by Penn, himself, of the practice of a solemn religious rite by certain Indians, of sacrificing the deer on rude altars composed of twelve stones, but after considerable search have been unable to find it.

68, Page 419. In sight of the spot where Stony Brook passes under the old stone bridge on the York and Wright's-Ferry turnpike, stands the oldest house in York county. Local historians say it was the first *stone* house built in the county. From a legend cut in a stone tablet in the rugged wall over the main entrance we learn that "this house" was built in 1734 by Johannes Schultz and Christiana, his lawful wife; Johannes, it seems, was a blacksmith as well as a farmer, and immediately above the inscription he placed the lucky and protecting horse-shoe; on the one side of it the hammer, and on the other the tongs. Unlettered German as he was, he evidently was not ignorant of the stipulations contained in the covenant which St. Dunstan, his pious and illustrious predecessor at the forge and the anvil, exacted from his satanic majesty while under duress of pinchers and red-hot shoe, as "indemnity for the past and security for the future."

Here it was—at the old "Schultz house"—then on the great road from the Delaware westward, that the Continental Congress in its flight on horse-back from Philadelphia to York Town, in 1777, halted for rest and refreshment; and it can, perhaps, be hardly considered an unwarranted assumption that its immortal members quenched their thirst from rustic bowls of water dipped from the rippling stream of Stony Brook.

69, Page 420. Just inside the fence that separates what was once the beautiful grove of sturdy oaks from the turnpike road, there stood, until within a few years, as grand and stately an oak as ever adorned the land of Penn; and often as I passed it, I never failed to honor and admire it. But what was my surprise and indignation, when, a few years ago, approaching the place on a rural ramble with an esteemed friend, we found that the grand old monarch had, by ruthless hands, been laid low—felled to the ground—sawed off, and its ponderous trunk cut into suitable length for a mill-shaft, and its once towering top and brawny limbs into cord-wood! On counting the rings indicating its age, we found they numbered *two hundred and sixteen!* According to which, it was a hardy sapling of about eleven years' growth at the date of Penn's Charter; (4th of March, 1680) and a tree of *one hundred and seven years* when the Continental Congress drank from the waters of Stony Brook and rested in the shade of the sturdy oaks that flourished on its grassy banks.

70, Page 420. It is said that it required a team of eight sturdy farm-horses to haul its trunk over the range of hills that skirt the valley on the South, to the nearest saw-mill, where it was prepared for a shaft for an over-shot wheel at the old-time grist mill just below, on Stony Brook.

71, Page 427. See Note **22,** page 178.

72, Spinning parties were quite customary in certain localities, as appears from a contribution made to The Penna. Mag. of History and Biog., January, 1887, by Mrs. M. E. Snow, of Wilkes-Barre, from the Note Book of her uncle, Isaac A. Chapman, author of a History of Wyoming and also of a song which was set to music and sung at a spinning party where the young people had gathered for social enjoyment in the old-time way, twenty-nine years ago. One stanza of the song runs thus:

"And when those blissful hours shall come
Which crown each earthly joy,
Those hours which give a happier home,
Shall happier thoughts employ;
Content in any sphere of life,
I'll pass each happy day,
And free from tumult, noise and strife,
I'll spin dull care away."

(The last line is the refrain, and might, not inappropriately, have been written,

I'll *spindle* care away.

ERRATA.

Page 21, 2d stanza, 3d line, omit "the."

Page 26, 5th stanza, 2d line, for "enrout" read enroute.

Page 33, 3d stanza, 1st line, for "Aquaries" read Aquarius.

Page 35, 2d stanza, 6th line omitted, viz:—As sun and moon and stars do now.

Page 44, 3d stanza, 7th line, for "traning" read training.

Page 49, 5th stanza, 2d line, for "syren" read siren.

Page 108, 2d stanza, 4th line, for "faggots" read fagots.

Page 149, 4th stanza, 4th line, for "conquor'd" read conquer'd.

Page 156, 5th stanza, 7th line, for "otaen" read oaten.

Page 170, 1st stanza, 5th line, for "wollen" read woolen.

Page 170, 2d stanza, 2d line, omit "with."

Page 194, 3d stanza, 2d line, for "colered" read colored.

Page 206, 1st stanza, 3d line, for "Appollo" read Apollo.

Page 220, 4th stanza, 3d line, for "no no-more" read no more.

Page 236, 2d stanza, 4th line, for "turning" read tuning.

Page 237, 2d stanza, 1st line, for "Till" read Still.

Page 237, 3d stanza, 6th line, for "me" read the.

Page 274, 2d stanza, 2d line, for "counsellor" read counselor.

Page 274, 3d stanza, 4th line for "Plald" read Plaid.

Page 294, 2d stanza, 1st line, for "horses' read houses.

Page 315, 3d stanza, 4th line, for "say" read stay.

Page 333, 3d stanza, 4th line, for "Buru" read Buren.

Page 343, 3d stanza, 3d line, for "near" read mean.

Page 356, 6th stanza, 1st line, for "traick" read trick.

Page 398, 2d stanza, 2d line, for "Fate" read Fates.

Page 398, 3d stanza, 2d line, omit "once."

Page 398, 4th stanza, 4th line, for "boy" read bay.

Page 405, 3d stanza, 7th line, for "decending" read descending.

Page 416, 5th stanza, 3d line, for "brook" read book.

Page 424, 2d stanza, 1st line, for "tempest" read tempests.

Page 426, 4th stanza, 1st line, for "blest" read blast.

Page 451, 3d stanza, 2d line, for "luric" read lurid.

Page 451, 3d stanza, 5th line, for "days" read rays.

RD 7.7

AWAY TO THE HILLS.

"Then send round the cup, for oh, there's a spell in
Its every drop for the ills of mortality,
Talk not of the wine that sparkled for HELEN—
Her cup was fiction but this is reality."

AWAY to the hills let us hie from the city,
O'er the oft-trodden pathways before us,
And there, in the legend, the lay, or the ditty,
Let us join the wild birds in their chorus.

To the hills—'neath the trees, now arrayed in their glory,
Where the wild flowers breathe mingled sweetness,
Let us hie, and indulge in sweet song and old story,
And forget even Time, in his fleetness.

Where the rills leap the rocks and the mountain bells jingle—
To the pool where the thrush dips his feather—
Where the voices of waters and birds intermingle
And the roses and ferns dwell together.

Where the eagle soars high in the blue sky above us,
And the summer-clouds float far beneath him,
Let us gather, once more, with the true hearts that love us,
And gaze on the clouds that inwreathe him.

To the hills, to the hills, where the vine-dresser liveth—
Whose wine, nor whose heart ever sours—
Twice blessed is he who getteth and giveth—
Whose heart twines and clusters with ours.

Here let us drink deep, in the sunshine of May,
Forgetful of trouble and sorrow;
Still true to ourselves and duty to-day—
Still trusting in God for to-morrow.

SONG OF THE SPINNING-WHEEL.

"The twain that, in twining, before in the twine,
As twins were intwisted, she now doth untwine;
'Twixt the twain intertwisting a twine more between,
She, twirling her *twister*, makes a twist of the twine."

I knew a rustic lass, not less
Than sixty years ago—
Not one of dress and idleness
Nor vain and empty show;
"We twa" the winter-evenings spent—
"Frae" dusk till half past nine,
But here, alone, I, now, lament
The days o' auld lang syne.

Her face was fair, auburn her hair—
Her eyes were bright and blue,
Her hand was leal to household care,
Her heart was kind and true;
And, often as she o'er me bent,
She never curved her spine—
Straight backs and health together went
In days o' auld lang syne.

An old-time winter, ah, what scenes
The siren sound recalls;
The hardy swains, the rural queens,
The parties and the balls:
But one there was of *golden* worth,
For which I, still repine—
The *evening-scene around the hearth*,
In days o' auld lang syne.

The busy group around the lights—
Those lights of luric rays—
That often made sweet child-hood's nights
More bright than manhood's days:
Those days from youthland's rustic fires—
Alas, they no more shine;
And hope of their return expires
With dreams o' auld lang syne.

The merry maid with auburn hair,
And eyes so soft and blue,
Sang many an old-time rustic air
Which I kept humming to:
A many a yarn she spun on me—
Some course and others fine—
My merry homespun lass was she,
In days o' auld lang syne.

There was a time, long, long ago—
Some three score years and three—
When rural households, all, were clothed
In garments spun on me;[72]
But, now, my spinning-days are done—
Lang syne is now my theme,
Since every spinning-wheel doth run
By lightning or by steam.

No more I feel her gentle touch
Upon my naked arms,
Nor see that face aglow with such
A world of worth and charms;
No more her gentle foot I feel
So softly pressing mine,
Nor winds she threads upon the reel
As in the days lang syne.

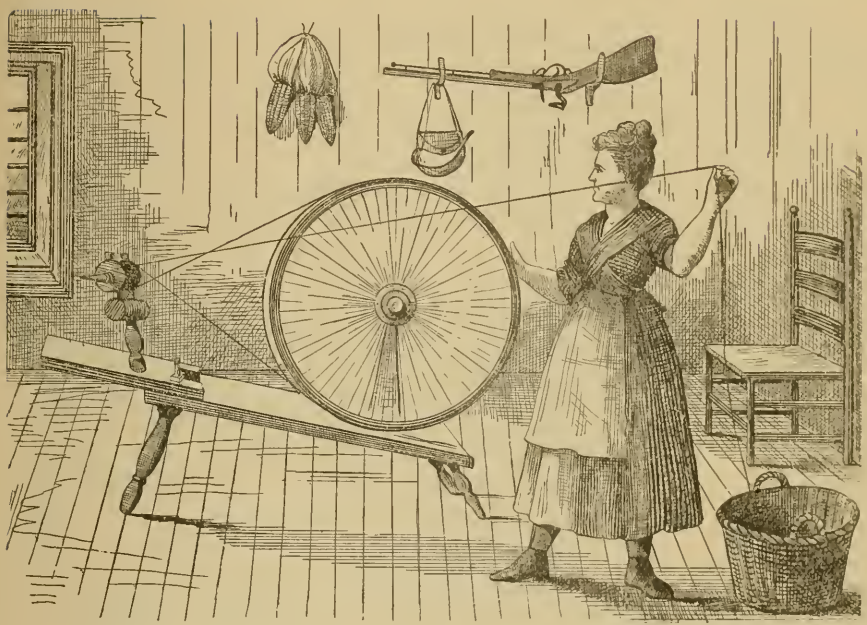
From Halloween till Candlemas,
Together did we toil,
And often did my loyal lass
Anoint my joints with oil:
Yea, many an old-time winter e'en
Together did we twine,
While she, my royal, rustic queen
Sang songs o' auld lang syne.

When Candlemas had set me free
And spinning-nights were o'er,
Upon her arms she carried me
Behind her bed-room door;
Or, to the old-time garret, where
Sweet rest and peace were mine,
All free from every toil and care
Till Halloween—lang syne.

That merry maid of fairest fame,
Whom many sought to win,
A wife, a mother, too, became
And taught her girls to spin;
And all their daughters, in their turn—
A long and noble line—
On me the art of spinning learned
In days o' auld lang syne.

She married a staunch husbandman
Of hale and rustic birth,
A native Pennsylvanian
Of character and worth:
As his folks were of Scotch descent
And hers hailed from the Rhine,
Their hearts and voices oft were blent
In songs o' days lang syne.

And part of her outfit I was
    And rode upon the wain,
And on the coming night there was
    The hanging of the crane:
There never was a merrier night
    Of song and dance and wine;
For hearts were light and hopes were bright
    In days o' auld lang syne.



My burly, boon companions were
    The winder and the reel,
And to complete the whole affair,
    The great old twining wheel:
And, while the crane was being hung,
    Around the new-made shrine
The consecrating voices rung,
    In days o' auld lang syne.

On me they spun their woolen spoil
And kept me whirring 'round—
Anointed me with olive oil—
With flax, my head they crowned:
But now, the fashions of the day,
And pride and hate combine
To keep me banished far away—
A "relic" o' lang syne!

But while the years were rolling 'round
And yarns were being spun,
An heirloom, I was handed down
From worthy sire to son:
And, as the seasons brought the day,
Still did we spin and twine,
The maiden softly sang the lay
And I hummed "auld lang syne."

At length, when I was old and frail,
I suffered this great wrong—
They put me up at public sale
And sold me for a song;*
The crier begged for bids on me,
And at the final round,
He slowly drawled out, "once, twice, t-h-r-e-e"—
And, then, he knocked me down.

When down, 'mid laughter of the crowd,
I heard him thus inquire—
In words accented, sharp, and loud—
"Come forward! who's the buyer?"
None came: "then up again," said he—
Then came a friend of mine,
Paid down the "fip," accepted me
For sake o' auld lang syne.

The friend who took me was a man
Who sometimes wrote and rhymed,—
A queer old antiquarian,
Who mount Parnassus climbed
And gathered up old spinning- wheels
And relics in that line—
Old clocks, old cradles, winders, reels,
And sang o' days lang syne,

* "O' Sixpence."

No more a merry lass doth ply
Her foot upon my treadle ;
Instead, each maiden now must try
Her foot upon the pedal :
No matter where my lot is cast,
A lonely lot is mine ;
My day is past, and I, alas !
In vain recall lang syne.

Upon the gloomy garret, here,
With off-casts is my doom—
Save, when, for show, or sport or sneer,
I'm in the drawing-room ;
Here, shorn of title, crown and rank,
I court the gentle Nine,
Since I have *turned* poetic "crank,"
And sing o' days lang syne.

YOUTHLAND.

OFT', as the shades of evening gather,
I hear a soft, familiar strain—
A sound so strange and, yet, familiar,
That seems to call me home again.

'Tis like the Alpine horn of shepherds
Upon the mountain's sunny side,
Or herdsman's song, borne on the zephyrs,
From western plains at eventide.

As, through my soul, these strains, at evening,
Vibrate in cadence, soft and low,
An exile, far from youthland, grieving,
A weary wand'rer, still, I go.

O, youthland, dear, so bright and sunny,
Where birds and maidens sweetly sang!
O, land of peace, of milk and honey,
Where streams from mossy fountains sprang!

O, days of all unmingled pleasure—
(In youthland *years* were all unknown,)
The thought lends sadness to the measure,
Of youthland-days, forever gone.

Oft', when the eye of day is closing,
For youth and youthland-days I yearn,
And, in half dreamy moods, the glozing,
Deceptive images return.

O, wondrous mold of flesh and spirit—
Of sense and fancy so combined,
That we should be so strangely gifted
With beauteous visions of the mind.

Ye fairy scenes, too oft' delusive—
Bright images of Fancy's play,
Like a mirage at sea, illusive
Of youth and youthland, far away.

O, land whose birds and streams and fountains
My youthful heyday once beguiled ;
Far from thy vales and dark-blue mountains,
A lonely wand'rer—self-exiled !

As though I had some crime to answer,
Like one exiled in days of old ;
From youth and youthland I am banished,
No more its brightness to behold !

In vain, though soft and softer, ever,
The sound of Alpine horn were poured ;
Alas, alas, and shall I never
To my lost youthland be restored !

O, tell me, thou ærial rover—
Thou curlew, wand'ring through the skies—
O, tell me crane and wailing plover,
Where my dear, long-lost youthland lies !

O, tell me *all* ye birds of passage—
Ye wanderers from sea to sound,
Can ye not bring me some sweet message—
Where my lost youthland may be found!

As years roll on and strength is failing,
I pass into a deeper gloom;
And ever more my lot bewailing
A banished, hopeless, exile's doom.

Ah, no; the years so swiftly flying,
Me nearer to its borders bring,
And though for youthland, still, I'm sighing,
Of that dear youthland, still, I sing.

Beyond the dark and gloomy river,
Whose surging billows near me roll,
Immortal youthland, bright forever,
Invites the weary wand'ring soul.

There worth and wisdom never perish,
And love and friendship banish gloom;
There fruits and flowers forever flourish,
And youth and health, immortal, bloom.

Then gather fast, ye evening shadows,
And come, thou soft, familiar strain,
Like Alpine horn, dispel this sadness,
And call the wand'rer home again.

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